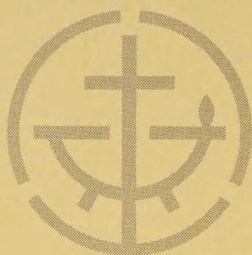


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SOME PROBLEMS  
OF EXISTENCE

BY

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LONDON

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1907

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DEDICATED TO  
MY SISTER  
EMILY LOVETT CAMERON

*Debita et ingenio præmia reddat amor*

330553





## PREFATORY NOTE

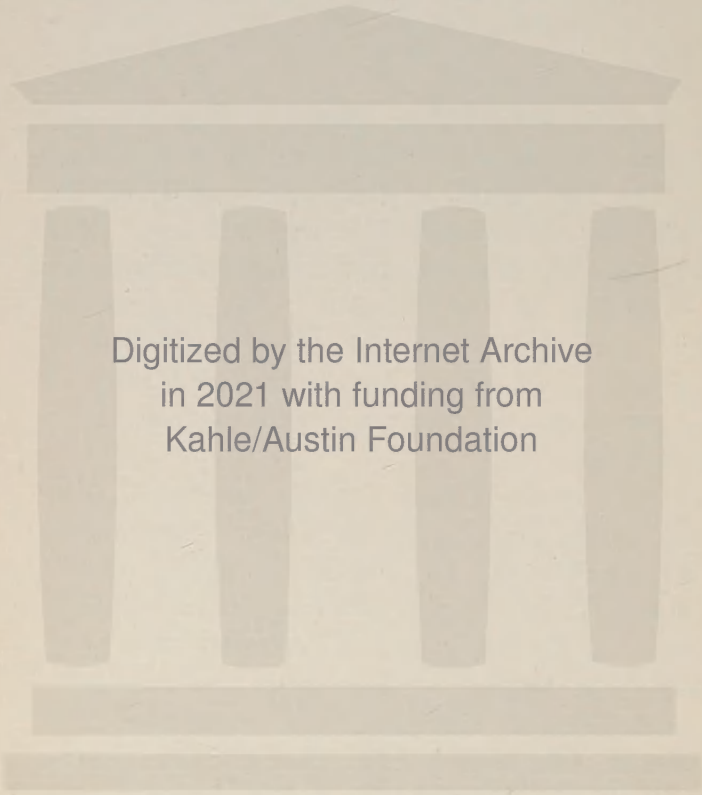
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THE chapters on "Before Birth," "After Death," "Animal Immortality," "The Sanction of Morality," and "The Possibilities of Prayer," appeared originally in *The Nineteenth Century*, but have been largely altered, in some cases almost rewritten, for the purposes of republication. The chapter on "Evil" has appeared in *The Monthly Review*. I am greatly indebted to the respective editors of these periodicals for their courteous permission to republish them here.

Some quotations from (1) *The Origin of Life*, by Mr. Butler Burke; (2) *The Divine Immanence*, by Mr. Illingworth; (3) Martineau's *Study of Religion* and Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*; (4) *The Dilemma of Determinism*, by Professor James; (5) *Multiple Personality*, by Drs. Sidis and Goodhart, are made by the kind permission respectively of (1) Messrs. Chapman & Hall Limited; (2) Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Limited; (3) The Clarendon Press; (4) Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co.; and (5) Messrs. D. Appleton & Co. of New York.

NORMAN PEARSON.

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# SOME PROBLEMS OF EXISTENCE



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

THE questions discussed in this book are questions which will confront any serious inquirer into the purpose and character of man's existence and destiny. Different—in many cases widely different—answers have been given to them by philosophy, theology, and science, and the attempt to reconcile the conflicting claims of these authorities has resulted in little more than a dispirited perplexity. Each of them demands, and rightly demands, a paramount jurisdiction within its own sphere, but all alike are apt to ignore the fact that, to some extent at any rate, their respective jurisdictions limit each other. Philosophy is the expression of thought, theology of the religious instincts, science of classified experience, and not unnaturally they have different accounts to give of any object which comes within the purview of them all. The philosopher's conception of the



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Deity differs from that of the theologian, while to the scientist the very existence of a Deity is at best but an unprovable hypothesis.

So, too, with regard to the problems here dealt with, a similar difference or even discordance of opinion will be found. The result is a deadlock, unless we can effect some satisfactory adjustment of these conflicting pretensions. It is useless to deny the ascertained results of science, and it is worse than useless to ignore the conclusions of thought, or the deeply seated instincts of mankind which make for religion. Accordingly, I have here attempted to sketch the outlines of a theory which philosophy and religion may be able to accept, and science need not reject, and which provides for these problems some not unreasonable solutions.

My postulates for this theory are—(1) the existence of a Deity, (2) the immortality of man, (3) a Divine scheme of evolution of which we form part, and which, as expressing the purpose of the Deity, proceeds under the sway of an inflexible order. Such postulates, I think, are not too extravagant, and will suffice to meet the needs of the case. For if we accept the beliefs in a Divine ruler of nature, and an immortal career for man, which religion proclaims and philosophy need not deny, and accept also the belief in that inviolate order of nature on which science insists, it is surely possible to contemplate existence as a Divinely ordered scheme, in which all these can find their appropriate places.

## CHAPTER II

### BEFORE BIRTH

EACH human personality lives hedged in between the two mysteries of the past and the future, the whence and the whither. If this personality is but a passing manifestation of physical energy "between a sleep and a sleep," neither the one mystery nor the other is of any importance to us. If, again, it is a special creation, something which is called out of nothing at birth, and launched on a mission of eternity, we need only be concerned for its future. But if it is imperishable, or at least contains some imperishable element, then it must needs have a history as well as a destiny, a past as well as a hereafter.

Each of these views has its own difficulties. The theory that the human personality contains nothing which cannot be referred to physical energy, and does not perish with the physical life to which it is attached, rests only on negative evidence, and does not meet the psychical requirements of the case. Science, rightly enough, refuses to admit the scientific validity of a belief which cannot be reduced to scientific demonstration. But philosophy

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and religion are also entitled to a voice in the matter, and science cannot claim to have disposed of the question until their reasonable claims have been met. The theory that the personality consists of a specially created and immortal soul is confronted with the difficulty, among others, of supposing that something which is to have no end, has nevertheless had a beginning—the difficulty, in short, of a something which is immortal at one end only. It conflicts, moreover, with the system of evolution which seems to be the law of development throughout nature generally, and it is simply irreconcilable with the hereditary transmission of mental qualities. And finally, the theory of the pre-existence of the personality threatens to entangle us in the doctrine of metempsychosis, with all its attendant difficulties.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the pre-existence of the soul in one form or another is the most hopeful theory of the three, for under it alone is there any possibility of adjusting the demands of philosophy and religion to the doctrines of science.

Assuming, then, as we must for the present purpose, the existence of the human soul, let us see if a workable hypothesis of its origin and growth cannot be framed on these lines. I use the term soul as comprising all that is enduring in the ideas of the personality, the Ego, the Self, the character, and the mind; and I treat it as meaning that permanent something which is the essence of each individual's personality, and which may be conceived of as persisting after the transient attributes

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV. p. 31 ("Animal Immortality").



of the personality have disappeared. The soul in this sense is obviously something more than mere life, but it cannot be dissociated, even in thought, from the accompaniment of life. Accordingly, if we are to trace the history of the soul we must go back to the beginning of life; that is to say, to a point where life sprang, not as now from antecedent life, but from non-living matter. It is true that at present the laboratory has yielded no conclusive demonstration that this can take place; but unless we place life outside the law of evolution, we are bound to suppose that such abiogenesis has occurred in the past. Failing this, we can only account for the appearance of life by referring it to miraculous agency.

The gap between living and non-living matter is no doubt considerable, but the excessive stress sometimes laid upon this distinction gives rise to an impression that the two kingdoms differ *toto calo* in their character and laws, and proceed upon different lines of development. It would probably be more accurate to compare their development to a chain, of which one of the links is hidden or lost. By examining the frontier cliffs of the two countries, geologists are able to declare that England and France were once united, notwithstanding the sea which now flows between them. And in like manner, if we look carefully across the ancient gulf which severs living from non-living matter, we may yet find some evidence that this gulf represents, not an original division, but a breach of original continuity. For this evidence we must look to the edges of the gap.

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In speaking of "living" matter I use the term in the sense of matter which is definitely recognised by biological usage to be alive, in exclusion of the wider scope given to it by Mr. Butler Burke (*The Origin of Life*), under which radiobes, and even in a sense the whole of Nature (p. 74), is deemed to be alive. I do not presume to criticise his definition; indeed, as will be seen later, my own view is that terrestrial matter is endowed with a fundamental capacity for life in virtue of the mind-stuff with which it is associated. But the question with which I am here attempting to deal is neither so broad nor so deep. It does not profess to go back to the remote inorganic precursors (one can hardly say ancestors) of the organisms which biologists at large would describe as living, or to take into account organisms not capable of reproduction, or only of a reproduction which is degenerative, *i.e.* which does not reproduce the parent forms, but lower products, which do not go through the same vital processes.

<sup>1</sup> Now, the most highly fashioned product of non-

<sup>1</sup> Since this passage was originally written, it has been strongly corroborated by Mr. Burke's researches. He produced crystals of glycerine at a low temperature (*Origin of Life*, p. 91). Protoplasm he regards as an organised substance consisting of crystalline molecules. His experiments with radium salts on sterilised bouillon produced bodies which, beginning with the minutest specks, developed into two dots, then into a dumb-bell-shaped body, then into a body with a biscuit shape, then into something like frog spawn, and finally resolved into minute crystals (*ib.* p. 108). His conclusion is that these bodies are neither crystalline nor colloid in disguise, but are colloid as aggregates, and crystalline in their constituent parts. "The point which distinguishes them from both of these is perhaps the fundamental principle which marks them out at once as possessing the elements of vitality in a primitive and most undeveloped state."

living matter is the crystal: the lowest form of living matter is a colloid, or jelly-like speck. At first sight there seems little enough in common between the two, but the distinction is less rigorous than it appears to be. Some of the minerals now known to us are found in colloid as well as crystalloid forms, and in flint we have a familiar instance of a crystal which has passed through a colloid stage. Colloid matter, therefore, seems to have double possibilities of development: it may develop into crystalline, or into living matter. The mobility which is its chief characteristic makes it a suitable vehicle for life; but, of course, mere mobility cannot by itself give life to non-living matter. By making matter impressionable, so to speak, it gives it the possibility of becoming alive, but nothing else. Something more is needed to change this passive capability of modification by external stimuli into a capability of active response to them, and thereby to give this process of adjustment that purposive and selective character which seems to be of the essence of life. It is obvious what this something must be. It must be some form, however faint, of *sentience*. In other words, *mind* must be added to matter to produce life.

But how is this mind to be provided? Not, surely, by a miraculous interference with the order of nature, but out of the bosom of Nature herself. The late Professor Clifford propounded a theory which seems to meet the needs of the case. According to this theory, a feeling can exist by itself without forming part of a consciousness. The

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elemental substance, of which even the simplest feeling is a complex, he calls "Mind-stuff."

"A moving molecule of inorganic matter does not possess mind or consciousness, but it possesses a small piece of mind-stuff. When molecules are so combined as to form the film on the under-side of a jelly-fish, the elements of mind-stuff which go along with them are so combined as to form the faint beginnings of sentience. When the molecules are so combined as to form the brain and nervous system of a vertebrate, the corresponding elements of mind-stuff are so combined as to form some kind of consciousness. . . . When matter takes the complex form of a living human brain, the corresponding mind-stuff takes the form of a human consciousness, having intelligence and volition."—*Mind*, vol. iii. p. 57.<sup>1</sup>

In this theory mind-stuff is at first treated as something distinct from, though inseparably connected with matter; but Clifford subsequently seems to change his position, and to regard mind-stuff as the one absolute reality of which matter is only a manifestation. Mr. Burke takes the same view, but I do not think it at all necessary to follow them to this conclusion, a conclusion which transfers the question from biology to metaphysics. Whether it be philosophically sound or not, is, for my immediate purpose, indifferent. It is probable enough that mind and matter

<sup>1</sup> In a note to this article Professor Clifford remarks that he had found traces of his theory in other writers, mentioning particularly Kant and Wundt. I hazard the suggestion that chemical affinity and other similar energies may possibly be referred to the operation of mind-stuff.

may, in the last analysis, prove to be, if not identical, at least to be manifestations alike of some single principle. (See Chapter V.) But in the world of our experience they are diverse in character and function; and it is the world of experience with which for the moment I am dealing. We may therefore regard matter and mind-stuff as, provisionally, the basic elements of terrestrial existence, though it is impossible to say yet what the actual distinction between them may prove to be.

And now it may be possible to venture on a guess as to how life originated. We have seen that a colloid stage is common both to certain forms of crystal and to living matter. It is possible, therefore, that some form of colloid matter may have been the connecting link between organic and inorganic existence. It might, in fact, be regarded as a common ancestor, holding a position analogous to that of the common ancestor from which man and the anthropoid apes are supposed to have diverged. We must then suppose that, in due course of evolution, some variety of colloid matter appeared of a sufficient complexity for its attendant mind-stuff to function as sentience. This would then pass upward on to the lowest rung of the ladder of life; but it would carry with it all the potentialities which it had acquired in the course of its organic development, though these would naturally be modified by the new conditions of vitality. Under these circumstances we might expect to find in the evolution of living matter some trace of the energies which it inherited from non-living matter. And this expecta-

tion seems to be actually fulfilled ; for we find in the structures of the vegetable world strong suggestions of the operation of crystalline energy. Flower and leaf are advanced organic products, but crystallisation in non-living matter had long before anticipated the idea of their form. The patterns of frost on a window pane often display, even to the naked eye, the closest resemblance to foliage and flowers. Similar crystals under the microscope reveal the same resemblance in greater profusion ; and even in some of the lowliest forms of life quasi-crystalline structures are often to be found. It is possible that such similarities may be mere coincidences, but it is surely more reasonable to suppose that life, in the formation of vegetable structures, has utilised the crystalline potentialities which it brought over from inorganic matter. It is not suggested, of course, that organic structure is built up entirely by crystalline agencies, but if these are even partially or occasionally employed, an interesting light is thrown on the lineal connection between living and non-living matter. Neither is there any necessity to show that this transition from the non-living to the living takes place, or can take place now, seeing that the thermal and other conditions under which life first arose differ widely from those of the present day.

But this primitive sentience which comes in as the crowning factor of life is something more also. It is the spiritual germ from which is evolved at length the complex mental structure of the human soul. As physical life mounts higher, soul life follows in its train, till the lowly sentience of the



primal monad is replaced by the high mental complexity of the vertebrate. From the very beginning, body and mind, so to speak, advance together, and in each case the advance is towards a higher *structure*. But though their advance is concurrent, mind must be regarded as having actually taken the lead. Mind-stuff, striving to realise its possibilities, would seize upon any variation in its associated matter favourable to this end; and thus, by improving the physical vehicle in which it is to function, it would promote the advance of physical as well as mental structure. Alike in the realm of mind and in the realm of matter, structural improvement is the principle of all progress, including the development of the human soul. The details of this development are more fully dealt with in a later chapter (Chapter IV.), and we may now pass on to consider what is the character or constitution of the soul.

But there is a psychological difficulty which must first be disposed of. It may be said that though the process of mental evolution above indicated may suffice to account for the appearance of mere consciousness (such as we ascribe for instance to some of the lower animals), it does not account for the appearance of that *Self*-consciousness—the sense of Ego or personality—which is the distinctive feature of the human soul. Consequently, it will be said, the human soul must contain an element which cannot be referred to any natural source, and must therefore be, to some extent at any rate, a special creation. The difficulty is a real

one. For it is not easy to see how a mere capability of apprehending sensations can furnish forth an "Ego" which apprehends. In some way or another consciousness becomes able to turn from the perception of sensations as such to a cognition of the sensations as states of itself. And how is this brought about? I suggest as an explanation that this power of self-recognition is a capability inherent in mental organisms of a sufficiently high complexity, and is a property which is to be referred to this complexity of structure. The very fact that, with all endeavour, we cannot get at the back, so to speak, of our self-consciousness strongly suggests that this self-consciousness is not an independent entity, but a property of structure.

Again—to approach the subject from another side—wherein does the unity of the "Ego" consist? Clearly not in identity of individual Self, as would surely be the case if the Self were a special creation. The Selves of the child, of the man in his prime, and the man in his old age, are *not* identical. We feel, indeed, that there is a continuity through all these changes, but this is because we can recognise connecting links between each of the several Selves; and these links are successive modifications of the mental whole—faculties, emotions, appetites, and aversions—of which Self is composed. *Pari passu* with these we find structural modifications of body and brain. This does not perhaps amount to demonstration, but it does justify an inference that there is some *structural* connection between the two sets of modifications, and consequently that the

unity of Self is preserved through all its variations by the mind-structure.

But there is a closer parallelism yet. Whatever be the nature of the "Ego," its physical organ is the brain; and it is of course notorious that the capacities of consciousness are, speaking generally, connected with complexity of brain structure. Nobody would believe that the "Ego" of a Newton could be found in combination with the brain of a Bushman. Nobody, on the other hand, will deny to the Bushman an "Ego" of some kind, however low. "Egos," then, vary in quality,—a fact not easily reconcilable with the idea of special creation. And since their quality varies with the complexity of their brain organs,—a matter of *physical* structure,—must not their differences of quality depend on differences of *mental* structure, corresponding to the structural differences of their brain organs? We rightly regard self-consciousness as our highest human quality, but we do not always recognise how closely quality and structure are connected. Matter in its simplest form must be regarded as homogeneous, and the present diverse qualities of material things are clearly the results of various molecular groupings,—in short, of structure. Structure, for instance, is alone responsible for the difference between ordinary carbon and the diamond. Another proof of what diversities of quality structure can produce is shown by the "isomerism" of chemistry. Substances composed of the same elements, and in the same proportions, are chemically described as isomeric. But the properties of isomeric bodies often differ

widely, as may be seen in the case of starch, gum, and a certain form of sugar. All these are isomeric, and their differences depend simply on the different arrangements of their component molecules. With these facts in view, it seems reasonable to think that the correlation of quality and structure which we find in the material world may be found in the mental world also; and if this be so, there is nothing to forbid us to suppose that even the highest human quality may be a product of structure.

If we still press for a mechanical account of how self-consciousness operates, we may arrive at some such conclusion as this. Consciousness is a mental structure which responds more or less perfectly to nerve stimuli. If this response be described in terms of matter, we must regard it as being in itself a sort of thrill. Accordingly, in the mind-structure of an animal incapable of *self*-consciousness, a conscious state is just a responsive thrill, the recoil to which would pass off in some of the commoner forms of energy. But in the more sensitive and complex mind-structure of the man, the recoil might partly pass back into the mind-structure, and this absorbed recoil constitute consciousness of *Self*. In this case, a state of simple consciousness might be described as the mind-structure's thrill to nervous stimuli, a state of self-consciousness as a thrill to its own thrills.

When we begin to inquire into the character or constitution of the human soul, our chief difficulty lies in the fact that so far as can be judged we are in the first stage of "Ego-hood." With regard to

most of our lower mental attributes, we can observe their relation to the past. We can see the ancestry of many of them in the lower animals, whose consciousness we can so far study and compare with our own. But the rise of the Ego is an entirely new feature, as to which we have neither past experience nor the possibility of past experience to fall back upon. For we cannot endow the mind-structures of the lower animals with that possibility of a personal survival after death which we can readily imagine in the case of the human soul. Indeed, it is this possibility of personal survival which is the really important point in the problem. It is this which is the distinctive feature of the soul, and therefore to ascertain what the constitution of the soul is, we have really to ask what is that which will survive our physical death?

We can see that the soul is a mental whole of some sort, but it is not so easy to define what are its essential contents. On the one hand, the whole of our mental equipment seems to form part of our personality. On the other hand, it seems incompatible with any considerable progress in future stages of our existence that this equipment in its entirety should be an essential part of the soul. The question is one which belongs in a special degree to theology, and though theology does not help us much to a solution, its failure brings the difficulty clearly before us. By theologians, as by most people, the soul is associated somehow with the personality. How much then of the individual personality is supposed by the orthodox to go to heaven or hell?

Does the whole of the mental equipment, good and bad, noble qualities and unholy passions, follow the soul to its hereafter? Surely not. But if not, and something has to be stripped off, how and where are we to draw the line? If, on the other hand, the surviving soul is something distinct from all our mental equipment except the sense of Self, are we not confronted by the incomprehensible notion of a personality without any attributes?

Perhaps, however, the difficulties of the question really spring from a misconception of the true nature of these attributes. We are apt to regard them as facts, whereas they are rather possibilities. The components of our mental equipment are not actual but contingent existences. We know them as mental states, but it is really more accurate to describe them as capacities for mental states. Anger, for instance, is a state of consciousness which arises in response to appropriate stimuli; but in the absence of such stimuli it is merely a latent capacity. A similar account may be given of our other mental components. All alike are capacities which either conduce to some present utility to ourselves, or are survivals from some obsolete utility in the past. As a pianoforte is silent till the keys are struck by the player, so character only leaps to life under the assailing stimuli of its environment; and the transient states of consciousness evoked by these stimuli are no more essential elements of the soul than the particular piece played by the performer is an essential element of the piano.

If this be so, the mental qualities which we



manifest here will not cling to us *unaltered* in any future existence, unless the conditions of such existence are *identical* with those which surround us here; and this we ought not to expect. Consequently the only part of our personality which can survive into the future is the self-conscious mind-structure, denuded of its present positive qualities, but retaining its capacities for response, and its structural predisposition to certain kinds of response, and this, and this only, is the true soul. From the remote past the development of the mind-structure on its upward path has been a process of modification by its environment, and if soul-evolution continues at all, similar influences must take up the task. In a new and higher environment, some of the responsive capacities and predispositions which the human soul now possesses will disappear by disuse, while new ones will be evolved by necessity. And thus the soul will pass onward and upward through purer and nobler stages of existence, till such perfection as is open to a personal existence be attained. These speculations, however, have carried us from before the cradle to beyond the grave, and belong more appropriately to the succeeding chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### AFTER DEATH

WITH regard to the character of the existence, if any, which awaits us beyond the grave, it would hardly be too much to say that the general attitude of mankind towards it is an attitude of indifference. Not one man in a hundred is ever troubled in the pursuits of his daily life by any thought of what is to happen to him after death, unless under the influence of sorrow or illness, or in the presence of some great catastrophe. Yet the importance of the subject is grave enough; and the faintness of the interest which it excites seems to be chiefly due to the unsatisfactory character of the accounts of this future life which are usually put forward.

Taking first the account of orthodoxy: the objections to this are so grave, and its inconsistencies so obvious, that it need not be dwelt upon at length. To most thoughtful persons they are already familiar, and on those who fail to recognise them argument would probably be wasted. The impossibility of conceiving hell as the design of an omnipotent and benevolent God presents a dilemma from which there is no escape. Orthodoxy insists on the com-

bination of these attributes in the Deity, but it never has answered, and never can answer, the objection that if God could have dispensed with hell, and did not, then He is not benevolent; if He would have dispensed with hell, but could not, then He is not omnipotent. Moreover, the idea of an eternity of torture in retribution for the sins of three score years and ten is altogether revolting to our sense of justice. And if the dark side of the picture is unendurable in its horror, the bright side does not offer much to attract us. The imagination of mankind is but feebly affected by the joys of heaven. We may profess to believe in them, but for all that we cannot bring them closely home to ourselves. The interests of earthly life, its sorrows and joys, its hopes and anxieties, irresistibly impress themselves on us as more part of ourselves. Moreover, the promises of heavenly happiness, besides being unattractive, are all too indefinite. We are, for instance, to meet the beloved dead there once more: but how, and in what guise? A young mother dies leaving an infant child: the child attains manhood, and weds the woman of his heart, who bears him children: she dies; and finally the man himself dies full of years. How are all these to meet in heaven? The young mother will yearn to see her baby once more, the wife her lover and husband, the children their revered father. Can the man be all these at once? If not, how are the conflicting claims to be adjusted? Is his soul to be a baby soul throughout eternity for the sake of his mother, or that of a man in his prime for the sake of his wife, or that of an aged man for

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the sake of his children? Then, again, the heaven of orthodoxy is often—I do not say always—made to consist of a sort of idealised church-going; and an eternity of adoration, to the suppression, total or partial, of our other faculties seems an end hardly worthy of the Divine design. Equally unsatisfactory is the vague spiritual survival which some philosophies offer; a colourless existence in a nebulous realm, where all vital possibilities seem restricted to contemplation.

But in truth the inherent defect of all these theories for us of the present day is that they belong to a period of thought which is now obsolete; a period when all conceptions of man's future proceeded from the assumption that he had no past. In those pre-evolution days his story was confined to the now and the hereafter. It was a story in two chapters only. His entire existence was apportioned between these two states: the one brief and transient, but with a range of possibilities bewilderingly wide; the other immutable, immovable, and eternal. No idea of progressive development after death brightened this grim vision of the hereafter. As the tree fell so must it lie. That which had been a complex of body and spirit became spirit alone, and spirit for ever. When the soul had once put off its perishable garment of flesh, it bade a long farewell to all material existence. Whether it joined the hosts of the blessed in heaven, or those of the lost in hell, or went wandering, an *animula*, *vagula*, *blandula*, in the dreary No-man's land of philosophic promise, it passed for ever from any material environment

into a realm of pure spirit.<sup>1</sup> Small wonder, then, that such a future life as this should seem entirely out of touch with the human interests which are so closely bound up with matter. The imagination could not really reconcile itself to this violent transformation, which wrenched from man nearly all the familiar features of his existence, and either raised him to a level which was far above his capabilities, or degraded him to one which was far below his deserts. The ordinary man, whose character is a blend of good and evil, feels that, though he is utterly unfitted for the position of an angel, he is certainly not bad enough for the doom of a devil; and he looks askance at any theory which offers nothing better than these uncompromising alternatives.

But the establishment of the theory of evolution has thrown a flood of new light on the question, and opened out possibilities undreamed of before. When once it is recognised that the present is the product of the past, it seems inevitable that the future must be similarly linked to the present. And thus the idea becomes possible of a grand process of cosmic development, in which man and his destiny have their appointed place. I say deliberately "their appointed place," because, though the mere fact of evolution does not by itself prove a benevolent design, and science is legitimately silent as to this,

<sup>1</sup> I do not overlook the material character of the fires of hell, and of many of the delights of the New Jerusalem; but these are merely superficial inconsistencies, and do not really affect the central doctrine, which gave a spiritual existence only to the Pneuma, or Spirit, which was regarded by theologians as the only immortal part of man.

yet there is nothing to forbid religion to believe that the order which we see in nature is the outcome and manifestation of a Divine and benevolent purpose. In this process the violent transitions of the older eschatologies will be replaced by orderly and gradual advance. *Natura nihil facit per saltum* is a maxim which is generally recognised in science, and it is hard to avoid extending its application to our dreams of a hereafter. The whole course of scientific experience points to a gradual evolution upwards, and the arbitrary exclusion of humanity from the operation of this law is unwarranted by any direct evidence, is repugnant to many of our strongest instincts, and is opposed to all the analogies which science suggests. But if this be so, it is clear that this world need not even be the first stage of the process, so far as man is concerned, and it is almost impossible that it should be the last, or rather the last but one.

What, then, are the conditions which after death on earth we may expect to find in the next stage of existence? Clearly they cannot differ very widely from those of present life, and they must certainly include material elements and surroundings. The capacities for response with which, as we have seen, the surviving soul is endowed, have mostly been acquired under material conditions, and it would be incapable of functioning at all adequately in any very dissimilar environment. At the same time, however, we may safely assume that the general course of our development will be towards a continually increasing spirituality. Consequently, it



seems probable that in each stage of our career a certain minimum advance in that direction must be attained, to enable us to enter upon the next stage with comparative ease and comfort. A homely illustration may make my meaning clearer. When an athlete determines to engage in a race, he prepares himself for the event by a careful system of training. The restrictions imposed by this system are highly distasteful to many men, and if an individual be either weak-minded or unconscientious, he may indulge in unlawful relaxations of these. But there is an accurately proportioned retribution before him. Just so far as his physical efficiency has been impaired by these secret excesses, so will he suffer from physical distress in the hour of contest. Similarly, just so far as we neglect to prepare ourselves in one stage for the more spiritual surroundings of the next, to that extent our lack of spiritual "condition," so to speak, will be an unfailing source of distress until the deficiency is made good.

And herein we may see the germ of truth which the orthodox eschatology contains. Stripped of all superstitious and other improper accretions, heaven may be regarded as the name for that complete harmony with our environment for which we are not forbidden to hope, and hell as the name for those discomforts which must inevitably befall an organism surrounded by an environment of higher development than its own. Under this view heaven is no special paradise of miraculous creation, reserved for the objects of a Divine preference, or the adherents of a particular theological creed. But it is the natural

goal of progress, the supreme accomplishment of the possibilities of human nature, and destined for all mankind. So also, hell is not a place of punishment devised for offenders against a code of Divine ordinances; still less is it a torture house where Divine vindictiveness may enjoy the agonies of some misguided heretics. It can be merely the sum-total of evils which are inexorably attached to the imperfect adaptation of an organism to its environment, but which altogether lack the character of avenging penalties deliberately imposed by an offended God.

And as material surroundings will be necessary to the due functioning of the soul in the next stage of existence, so also will they be necessary to its happiness. For its possibilities of happiness must obviously correspond with the possibilities of its structure. It enters upon its new career with a structure adapted to respond to a terrestrial environment only, and, for a time at any rate, happiness will only be possible to it in some environment generically akin to this. For it is surely a strange mistake to suppose that the mere death of the body produces a total alteration in the character of the soul. With due allowance for the changes which may ensue on the release of the soul from a body broken down by age or disease, the soul must begin a new stage with the character which it has acquired in the preceding stage. Were it not so, its evolution would be impossible. As it proceeds on its upward path its material conditions will doubtless become more

refined, and while this refinement will give freer scope to its spiritual energies, it may at the same time enormously increase the intensity of its happiness. Moreover, in speaking of material conditions, we must remember that matter exists, not only as the gross matter known to the senses, but in such impalpable forms as ether. And without offering any definite suggestion, I may point out that the soul, if united with a form of matter so subtle as to defy the closest microscopical research, matter which can penetrate between the molecules of the compactest mass, and which can vibrate at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, would hardly find its spiritual energies much impeded. It may well be, of course, that we shall not attain a physical frame of any such delicacy for many a stage yet in our career of development. We certainly cannot assume it till we are spiritually ready for it.

As to the organic character of such a body, it is almost impossible to speculate; but the mobility of its tissue would make it quickly responsive and readily adaptable to external changes, and would thereby reduce to a minimum the evils of maladjustment to which our present physical frames are liable. At the same time, there is no difficulty in supposing that our present faculties, and possibly new ones, might well exist under these new conditions.

Perhaps it is permissible to give the rein to fancy in order to illustrate my meaning. Mr. Andrew Lang has written a dainty poem about the Homeric Phæacia—the land whose inhabitants were friends

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of the gods,—in fact a sort of fairy-land, or a heaven upon earth. In this, by an exquisite touch, he suggests the possibilities of new pleasures which a deeper insight into the nature of things might bestow. His lines shall speak for themselves :

“The languid sunset, mother of roses,  
Lingers, a light on the magic seas,  
The wide fire flames as a flower uncloses,  
Heavy with odour, and loose to the breeze.  
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The strange flower's perfume turns to singing,  
Heard afar over moonlit seas ;  
The Siren's song, grown faint with winging,  
Falls in scent on the cedar trees.”

Fanciful as this picture may seem, I venture to think that it is strictly philosophical in the idea which it embodies of the unity underlying beauty and excellence in all their manifestations ; and I can see no reason why some such insight would be impossible to the quickened faculties of a higher development. With a nature material so far as the existence of such faculties might require, but spiritual to the highest degree in their exercise and enjoyment ; under physical conditions which might render us practically lords of space, and actually free from the host of physical evils to which we are now exposed, we might well attain a consummation of happiness akin to that for which we now strive, but idealised into something nearer perfection. The faculties which would enable us to obtain a deeper and truer view of all the manifestations of cosmic energy, would at the same time reveal to us new forms of beauty, new possibilities of pleasure

on every side; and—to take a single instance—the emotions to which the sight of Niagara now appeals might then be gratified by the contemplation of the fierce grandeur of some sun's chromosphere, or the calmer glories of its corona.

Nor is there any reason why the finer emotions should be banished from such an existence as I am now attempting to describe. A collection of intelligent individuals necessitates the existence of a society, though of course of a different constitution to any with which we are here familiar; and with the existence of a society a variety of social pleasures and social interests must needs coexist, though the precise nature of these is beyond our present powers of conception. Under such conditions the processes of nutrition and reproduction will naturally undergo modification. It seems unlikely that the higher stages of man's development will be accompanied by any such violent catastrophe as death, which of course is directly due to a failure of harmony with his environment. The closer adaptation and powers of adjustment which we must suppose will belong to these higher stages will probably preclude the necessity of any such rupture, and the transition from one stage to another will be effected in some easier manner. Regarding our present terrestrial existence as the stage at which the Ego first appears, physical reproduction seems necessary in order to provide suitable tenements for the Egos which are emerging from a lower stage. But when Ego-hood has once been established, reproduction may be no longer required; for though the future development

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of the soul might possibly proceed by means of a series of reincarnations, this course would not be necessary. Moreover, it is difficult to reconcile the theory of reincarnation with the facts of mental heredity (see Chapter XIII. p. 157), and on the whole it seems easier to suppose that the soul, with its Ego-hood now fully constituted, will proceed on its course of development without the intervention of reproduction and re-birth.

The fierce competition, the clash of conflicting interests, to which so many of the ills of our present existence are due, are related directly in most cases to our material needs, and will decline as these needs diminish or disappear, while our spiritual possibilities will be concurrently developed. Under such conditions as these we may well anticipate that wrong in its graver forms will die away, and that our relations to each other will become sanctified by that ever-widening sympathy which is a sure champion of the right.

And the end of all this? When evolution has finished its work, the result, we are told, will be a condition of stable equilibrium, in which all energies, being balanced, will become practically extinct. This may be true with regard to the material manifestations of the Power which underlies and is revealed in our system; but it can hardly be true of the Power itself, or of the spiritual personalities which seem to be its highest present expression. So long as these endure, their activities can hardly fail, and certainly not for want of new spheres of action. The universe will afford ample scope for all spiritual



energies ; nay more, it may even claim them for the due fulfilment of its purpose. The advancing soul will doubtless win its way into environments of deeper and purer happiness, but mere happiness can hardly be its final goal. As it mounts to higher levels of existence, it must—by all analogies from the past—grow richer also in wisdom and strength, becoming in every sense a worthier instrument for the hand of the Divine Power. Into the hidden workings of that Power we cannot penetrate, but if its methods be in any way akin to our own, it would be strange indeed if it should fail to make use of the instrument so carefully and so cunningly fashioned. Rather should we suppose that, as the soul develops its nobler capabilities, it will be entrusted with an ever-increasing share in the execution of the Divine scheme, which has evolved it in the past, and will guide its destiny in the future.



## CHAPTER IV

### ANIMAL IMMORTALITY

THE question as to whether there is any living existence in store for the lower animals after physical death is a very old one, and has often been answered in the affirmative. Traces of a belief in the continuity of animal existence appear in the philosophy of Heraclitus. Empedocles and the Pythagoreans held the generic identity of human and animal souls so strongly that they condemned the consumption of animal food, and indeed the destruction of any animal life. Similar doctrines are found in the theosophies of the East, and the doctrine of metempsychosis is distinctly formulated in Plato's famous description of the Vision of Er.<sup>1</sup>

Early Christianity was too deeply concerned with the hereafter of the human soul to pay much

<sup>1</sup> Empedocles seems to have thought that the souls of men and animals were souls which had been banished from heaven for their offences, and doomed to do penance in some body of the lower earth. He describes himself as

*φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης  
Νεικεῖ μαινομένῳ πῖσυνος,*

i.e., "an outcast from God-home and a wanderer, a thrall to raving strife"; elsewhere he declares that he has been in turn "a youth, a maid, a bush, a bird, and a dumb fish in the sea."

attention to the eschatology of animals, and it was not till the seventeenth century that the question was brought into some prominence by the Cartesian theory that the lower animals were automata, and as such had no feeling, *expressly* on the ground that they had no souls. This view was readily adopted by the theologians of the age, who saw in it a path of escape from the moral difficulty presented by the existence of animal suffering. Pascal regarded it as a means of exculpating Divine benevolence from the imputation of purposeless cruelty; and Malebranche supported it because, though opposed to reason, it was in accordance with faith.

The old doctrine of metempsychosis in its original form is clearly unworkable. Our present knowledge of physiology forbids the idea that the consciousness of an animal could function in the body of a man, or that the personality of a human soul could be compatible with the physical life of an animal. Nor, again, can we suppose that the consciousness of the dead animal will persist in an eternal animalism; for, independently of any other objections, this idea is hard to reconcile with the development which is the salient feature of evolution.

On the other hand, there are some strong *primâ facie* grounds for believing in *some sort* of future existence for animals. In the first place, it is plain that many of the higher animals closely resemble man both in physical structure and mental faculties. In some of the embryonic stages the two are scarcely distinguishable. With them,

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as with man, mental power, as a rule, varies concomitantly with the size and complexity of the brain. In this respect the highest apes come within a measurable distance of humanity; indeed, as a mere matter of brain capacity, there is less difference between the cranial capacity of the gorilla and the non-Aryan Hindu, than between the non-Aryan Hindu and the European, the difference being  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches in one case and 68 inches in the other.<sup>1</sup> The difference in mental power cannot be so precisely measured, but there is a corresponding approximation in this respect between the lowest men and the highest animals. And yet, according to current opinion, on one side of this division is immortality, on the other extinction. Eternal life for the Bushman; eternal death for the fox-terrier!

However, before the development of the theory of evolution, the question, though interesting as a speculation, was not of vital importance. But the advance of this theory brought it at once to the front. As soon as the Darwinian doctrine of the physical evolution of man from lower animal forms became firmly established, it was inevitable that the principle of that doctrine should be applied to his mental development, and that evolutionists should proclaim a psychological no less than a physiological continuity throughout the length and breadth of the animal kingdom. Consequently the

<sup>1</sup> The actual figures are—Highest European, 114 cubic inches; lowest Hindu, 46 cubic inches; gorilla,  $34\frac{1}{2}$  cubic inches.—Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature*, pp. 77, 78.

question of animal immortality acquired a new and important interest, from the fact that it was inseparably interwoven with the question of the immortality of man. It is quite possible, of course, to deny the immortality of the human soul; and such a denial, whether correct or not, is logically legitimate. But if we accept the immortality of the human soul, and *also* the belief that it has been evolved from the minds of the lower animals, how can we deny the survival in some form of animal minds? If mind and body perish together, there is no more to be said. But if we regard mind as something more than a temporary property of the bodily organism, we cannot in the same breath affirm and deny its evolution. We cannot legitimately declare that man's soul has been evolved from a series of lower animal minds, but that the necessary continuity of the evolutionary process is broken at every joint by the extinction of each member of the series. Clearly, therefore, on this view, animal minds must survive the physical death of the animal, and undergo a further evolutionary development.

And this brings us once more to a question which was temporarily put aside in the opening chapter, namely, the method and process of the soul's development. In that chapter the conclusion was reached that the earliest organisms arose from a combination of matter and mind-stuff, each having acquired some rudimentary degree of structural complexity. In the subsequent development of such an organism its organic progress will be

dependent on the harmonious interaction of these linked elements of matter and mind-stuff. Its mental part cannot develop properly, because it cannot operate properly, in an imperfect or mutilated physical structure. In like manner the due development of its physical structure cannot proceed without an effective mental equipment to educe its possibilities and minister to its needs; and every advance in physical complexity brings with it higher mental needs and possibilities. With the stroke of death, however, the partnership is severed. On the death of the organism its physical structure disintegrates and is resolved into organic matter; but its mind-structure must be exempt from any such disintegration if it is to form a link in the chain of mental evolution. We must accordingly suppose that when the physical organism dies, the mind-structure belonging to it does not forthwith decompose back into simple mind-stuff, but—normally at any rate—retains its structural unity.

In this disembodied state it is now free to enter into a new partnership, and to function again in a physical organism. Obviously, however, it could only be appropriated, so to speak, by a physical organism at least as highly developed as its last. But this does not mean that its migrations are restricted to members of one species, *e.g.*, that a canine mind-structure could pass on only from dog to dog. For, omitting a host of other objections, this view would require an original fixity of species which we know did not exist, and, moreover, it does not provide for any species

becoming extinct. It does not, for instance, provide any mental career for the mind-structures of the extinct Saurians of the early world, or of the Great Auks of our own day. Some wider possibilities must be open to it, or its career will be cut short.

Now, an organism in all its stages will require an environment mentally and physically adapted to it, including of course the possibility of proper nutrition. And as it derives its physical nutriment from the matter of its environment, so we may suppose it to derive the materials for its mental construction and maintenance from the environing mind-stuff. The analogy, moreover, may be carried a step further. In the order of physical development we find that vegetable organisms commonly draw the materials for their growth and nutrition from *inorganic* matter. Thus the plant depends for its nourishment on a proper supply of nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon, and these inorganic materials it works up within itself into protoplasm. But the higher organisms of animals depend for their nutrition on a proper supply of *formed protoplasm*. The ox, for instance, is nourished by the formed protoplasm of the grass which it assimilates, as the man, in turn, may be nourished by the formed protoplasm of beef. Similarly in the order of mental development, it may well be that in the case of the higher animals their minds or consciousnesses are largely built up of the mind-structures of lower animals whose physical life is over. As, in due course of evolution, higher and higher organisms appear, we may suppose that these would cease to draw solely upon simple



mind-stuff for their mental needs, but in virtue of their greater complexity would require, and be able to appropriate the *formed mind-stuff structures* fashioned by lower organisms, and gradually to group them into mental structures of a higher complexity. Thus the whole mental fabric of a lower form of life may be merely one of the molecules, as it were, which compose the consciousness of a higher form. This process we may suppose to continue till some mental structure is reached upon which *self*-consciousness dawns; with self-consciousness arises for the first time the Ego or soul, and at this point we may safely assert that it can undergo no further grouping.

Here, then, we seem to have reached a solution of the problem. Though there be not any personal or even individual immortality in store for the lower animals, yet their mind-structures may be supposed not to perish with their bodies, but to survive and be available for further service, either on the same mental plane, or as part of the mind-structure of some higher organism. Sooner or later, under this process, each lower mind-structure will be wrought into and become part of a human soul, and will thereby enter upon the career which this has before it.

This is the hypothesis which I submit as to the method and process by which the human soul is developed, and the animal mind-structure preserved. It is quite impossible to suppose that glorified animals as such can find a place in any ultimate hereafter; and it is only by incorporation into some

higher organism that the animal mind-structure can partake in any degree in the heritage of an immortal soul. I may remark incidentally that even this qualified survival gets rid of one great difficulty which has always clouded the question. I refer to the awful waste which the annihilation of animal minds would involve. Whatever the precise nature of an animal mind may be, it is at any rate a complex of great power and high capabilities. In many cases it does not fall far short of the mental level which in man we deem compatible with immortality. And if millions of such minds are annually destroyed, *as minds*, instead of being utilised, any belief in the intelligent control of the universe must receive a shock.

But whatever the theoretical merits of the hypothesis may be, it may fairly be asked whether there is any evidence to support it. And as to this I would remark in the first place, that there is a growing tendency to regard the Self as, fundamentally, not one, but many, not as a simple unity, but as a combined aggregate, whose unity rests on the due co-ordination of its component parts. This view has been well expressed by the late Mr. Myers :

“We start, then, with the single cell of protoplasm endowed with reflex irritability. We attempt a more complex organism by dint of mere juxtaposition, attaining first to what is termed a ‘colonial consciousness,’ where the group of organisms is, for locomotive purposes, a single complexly-acting individual, though, when united action is not required, each polyp in the colony

is master of his simple self. Hence we advance to something like a common brain for the whole aggregate, though intellectual errors will at first occur, and the head will eat its own tail if it unfortunately comes in its way. . . .

"We rise higher, and the organism is definitely at unity with itself. But the unity is still a unity of co-ordination, not of creation; it is a unity aggregated from multiplicity, and which contains no element deeper than the struggle for existence which has evolved it. The cells of my body are mine in the sense that, for their own comfort and security, they have agreed to do a great many things at the bidding of my brain. But they are servants with a life of their own; they can get themselves hypertrophied, so to speak, in the kitchen without my being able to stop them. Does my consciousness testify that I am a single entity? This only means that a stable *cænesthesia* exists in me just now; a sufficient number of my nervous centres are acting in unison; I am being governed by a good working majority. Give me a blow on the head which silences some leading centres, and the rest will split up into 'parliamentary groups,' and brawl in delirium or madness. Does my memory prove that I was the same man last year as now? This only means that my circulation has continued steady; the brain's nutrition has reproduced the modifications imposed on it by stimuli in the past. My organism is the real basis of my personality; I am still but a colony of cells, and the unconscious or unknowable, from which my thoughts or feelings draw their unity, is below my consciousness and not above it; it is my protoplasmic substructure, not my transcendental goal."—*Fortnightly Review*, 1885, p. 637.

A similar conclusion, from a somewhat different standpoint, is reached by Drs. Sidis and Goodhart in their recent work on *Multiple Personality*.<sup>1</sup> According to them :

“The principle of multiple individuality underlies the organisation of what may be regarded as the basis or counterpart of psychic life (*i.e.* the nervous system). . . . Although it may appear as a digression in a work on multiple personality to devote space to morphological structure of nerve elements, the reader is asked to bear in mind this important fact of intimate relationship of neuron and mental activity. One mirrors the other. The development of the various forms of neuron structure may be found to correspond or run parallel to the various modes of neuron organisation” (p. 8). Consequently “the individual mind may be regarded . . . as a complex system of many minds, or, more strictly speaking, the psycho-physiological individual may be viewed as an organisation of many subordinate individuals” (p. 52).

Later on the conclusion is re-stated :

“Personality is but relatively a unity, it is really a complexity of mental states. In analogy with the anatomical structure of neuron systems, the self is a complexity of many systems of systems, of what may be termed moments-consciousness” (p. 83).

Now states of consciousness are only found in connection with some individuality :

“The individuality may be of a high or of a very low type, it may be that of a man or it

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1904, by D. Appleton & Co., New York.

may be that of a fly, but it must be some *one* consciousness that synthetises the psychic state. It is this *one* synthetising consciousness that constitutes the essence of what we term 'moment-consciousness.'

If, then, we may regard the self-conscious mind-structure as built up of various constituents, why should not some of these constituents be the mind-structures of lower animals? Positive evidence of this view would be difficult if not impossible to obtain, but I think that it is indirectly corroborated by some of the phenomena of idiocy. From these we find that a relapse towards animalism generally is not at all uncommon among idiots. But in some cases of theroid idiocy a relapse is shown to particular animals. Dr. Maudsley gives some instances of this in his lectures on *Body and Mind*, pp. 47-53. Ape-faced and ape-natured idiots are moderately frequent, but relapses in this direction are less remarkable, because they might be a recurrence along the direct line of ancestry. But with idiots who resemble sheep and geese this explanation fails. An ovine idiot girl, referred to by Dr. Maudsley, refused meat, but took vegetables and water greedily. She expressed joy or grief by the words "be," "ma," "bah"; she would try to butt with her head, and displayed other ovine propensities, while her back and loins were covered with hair two inches long. Still more curious is the case of the anserine idiot girl which he mentions. This poor creature had a small head scantily covered with hair, large and prominent eyes, a lower jaw projecting more than an inch beyond

the upper jaw, the whole of the lower part of the face presenting the appearance of a bill. Her neck was very long, and so flexible that it could be bent backwards till it touched her back between the shoulder-blades. She uttered no articulate sounds, but displayed pleasure by cackling like a goose, and displeasure by screeching or hissing, and flapping her arms against her sides.

Such facts as these can scarcely be accounted for by atavism, for though man, sheep, and goose have a common ancestral origin, the branches which the two latter represent must have diverged from the common line long before the appearance of any such specialised creature as a sheep or goose. In short, the relationship between man and the other two being collateral only, the above facts cannot be explained as a back strain to a direct ancestor. On the other hand, they do seem to point to the undue prominence in a human organism of a specific animal element, and this is exactly what we might expect to occur occasionally if my theory of soul evolution should be correct. According to this theory, the materials of the human soul are drawn largely from lower mind-structures, which under ordinary circumstances are individually combined into a due subordination to the organic unity of the whole. But where from any reason such organic combination should be imperfectly carried out, it seems highly probable that some one of the animal mind-structures appropriated by the organism might be left in a position of undue prominence, and this would exactly meet the case of the theroid idiot.



Finally, the fact that the animal mind of the theroid idiot is accompanied by appropriate animal peculiarities of body points to a much closer *natural* connection between body and mind than any which is possible on the theological theory of the special creation of the soul. And here a short examination of this theory may be useful.

It denies the evolution of the human soul, and declares that man's being comprises an element which differentiates it generically from any animal's being. This element is said to be the *Pneuma* or spirit, and man's nature is regarded as tripartite, being composed of body, soul, and spirit. As to this Dean Alford observes :

“τὸ πνεῦμα is the SPIRIT, the highest and distinctive part of a man, the immortal and responsible *soul*, in our common parlance ; ἡ ψυχὴ is the lower or animal soul, containing the passions and desires which we have in common with the brutes, but which in us is ennobled and drawn up by the πνεῦμα.”

The doctrine rests chiefly on a passage in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, which runs thus :

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. v. 23).<sup>1</sup>

I think that most unprejudiced persons will consider this rather a slender foundation for such

<sup>1</sup> The following passages are also relied upon, among others, in support of it : Heb. iv. 12 ; 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15, and xv. 45-6.

an important doctrine, and will agree with the Rev. C. A. Row, who observes :

“The passage is a prayer for the complete sanctification of the Thessalonian converts, and their preservation in holiness unto the coming of Christ. It is therefore incredible that in such a prayer he (the apostle) should have intended to elaborate a philosophical psychology of man.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the usage of the two words, πνεῦμα and ψυχή, in the New Testament does not bear out the supposed distinction between them. It is clear from the instances collected by Mr. Row, that while πνεῦμα and ψυχή have to some extent distinct meanings, their meanings continually overlap each other; and the two words are “frequently used interchangeably to denote one and the same thing—namely, everything in man which distinguishes him from a mere animal.”

I will add one more criticism. If the *Pneuma* is, as Dean Alford says, “the highest and distinctive part of man,” all men must possess it, otherwise it would not be *distinctive* of man. It appears, however, from Jude 19 that some men do not possess *Pneuma*. The passage runs, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, *having not the Spirit*.” The Greek of the last words is ψυχικὸς πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχων, a perfectly clear and definite statement. Upon this passage Dean Alford has the following remarkable note :

“These men have not, indeed, ceased to have πνεῦμα as part of their highest nature, but they

<sup>1</sup> *Future Retribution*, p. 189.

have ceased to possess it in any worthy sense ; it is degraded beneath and under the power of the  $\psi\chi\eta$ , the personal life, so as to have no real vitality of its own."

Comment on this explanation is hardly necessary. To dispose of a troublesome passage by suppressing an all-important negative is a feat of exegetic audacity which shows the desperate expedients to which theologians are driven in their attempts to support this doctrine. It seems, however, to be practically unsupportable by the scriptural authority on which it is professedly based, and is hardly more discredited by the criticisms of its opponents than by the arguments of its friends.

Assuming, then, that the conclusions which we have reached as to the evolutionary origin of the soul are justified, it is obvious that they have an important bearing on our relations to the lower animals. If man's soul has any part in the hereafter, the minds of animals, through him, partake in it also, and we must cease to regard them as being, in the strictest sense, mere beasts that perish. At first sight it may seem that this wider view of the destiny of the animal mind should condemn all destruction of animal life. I do not think, however, that this conclusion is inevitable, unless it can be shown that the future of the animal is permanently injured by its physical destruction ; and for this supposition I see no ground whatever. On the contrary, if we regard the physical death of an animal, not as injuriously affecting its future, but as the necessary antecedent to its attainment of any higher existence,

many of the objections to animal destruction disappear.

However, if the minds of animals after physical death are ultimately destined to a higher future, is it in our power to aid this development? Of course any influence which we can exert in this direction is necessarily confined to those animals with which we are brought into immediate contact. But something may be done to develop these, possibly in moral sense, certainly in intellectual power. With regard to moral education, I am fully alive to the danger of interpreting animal states of consciousness by reference to our own. In ascribing vanity, sympathy, jealousy, and so forth to a lower animal, we have nothing whatever but analogy to guide us, and we can never be certain that we are not pushing this analogy too far. At the same time it is impossible to disregard animal expressions of emotion; and if we are to interpret them at all, we can only do so by reference to a human standard. On the whole, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that some of the lower animals exhibit emotions analogous, at any rate, to affection, sympathy, shame (as distinct from fear), and a certain sense of responsibility. Where these qualities appear, it is usually in our power to foster and promote their growth, and thereby to elevate and develop the animal's character.

Again, it is certainly in our power to abstain as far as possible from rousing the lower emotions, such as jealousy, rage, and the like, which cannot but impede the animal's moral development. On the side of inhibition the scope of educational treatment

is necessarily more limited. Punishment, or blame, which in this case we must suppose arouses the fear of punishment, is the only means at our disposal for repressing undesirable conduct in the lower animals; and as these cannot be expected to appreciate its educational purpose, punishment is simply a non-moral appeal to their terrors. It is not, however, without its value as a developing influence, since the suppression of a bad habit means the removal of an obstacle to the animal's progress.

But when we come to treat of the intellectual development of the lower animals, we tread on firmer ground. To take some special instances, the elephant, the dog, and even the horse, show themselves capable of a high degree of training. The attainment of this requires an amount of mental application which can hardly fail to produce an increased mental complexity. To acquire the accomplishments of a trained animal, something like reason must be brought into play. The creature's life is widened by the widening of its receptivity to stimuli, and, in short, if judged by a mental standard it becomes a higher animal. Nor, so far as it appears, need this development be accompanied by any diminution of its happiness. Animals constantly seem to take pleasure in their tricks or their duties, and a disciplined dog, for instance, certainly gives the impression of enjoying a larger and happier existence than one whose education has been neglected. In the case of those animals with which our relations are more distant, the difficulty of exerting any developing influence upon them will

vary directly with the extent of the gulf between us and them. But our conduct towards them should be guided by the same principles whenever an opportunity of applying them occurs.

In the days when such science as existed was the mere handmaid of theology, it was natural that the idea of animal immortality, being discountenanced by religion, should have gained little recognition from science.<sup>1</sup> But this state of things exists no longer. So far from this subject being forbidden to Science, she is surely bound to justify her latest doctrines by investigating it. Evolutionists almost unanimously proclaim the continuity of mental as well as physical evolution. In those evolutionists who believe that mind, even in its highest known forms, is only a specialised property of matter, silence is legitimate. For them the mind of man and animal alike is a product of physical growth, and perishes with physical death. But those who believe in the survival of the mental part of man are clearly bound to reconcile their exclusion of animal minds from a survival after death with their doctrine that man's mental evolution, no less than his physical evolution, is a continuous ascent through lower animal forms. If we suppose man's soul to be immortal, it is clear that it cannot be composed of mortal elements. Consequently, if the human soul is an evolutionary

<sup>1</sup> Recently it has found some theological support. The Rev. J. R. Illingworth, writing in *Lux Mundi*, says (p. 115): "Again, what are they (animals)? Had they a past? May they not have a future? What is the relation of their consciousness to the mighty life which pulses within the universe? May not Eastern speculation about these things be nearer the truth than Western science?"



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development of animal mind, we cannot logically assign immortality to the one and extinction to the other. Bearing in mind that mental and physical development advance, roughly speaking, together, the conclusion is almost inevitable, that both are processes of evolution *in* the individual organism, regulated and conditioned by structure. If this be so, man's mind, as well as his body, is the product of an evolution from lower animal forms in an unbroken line of continuity; and consequently, if the human mind-structure is held to be immortal, it is impossible to deny immortality to the animal mind-structures from which it has been evolved, and out of which it is largely fashioned.

## CHAPTER V

### SPIRIT AND MATTER

IN the preceding chapters we have had to deal more than once with the correlations of mind and matter ; and it may now be useful to examine more closely the nature of the distinction between them. According to popular ideas, mind and matter exist as two sharply contrasted opposites, members of a Dualism which lies at the root of things, eternal and unchangeable. As the old catch has it, "What is Mind? No matter. What is Matter? Never mind." This definition represents not inaptly the irreconcilable differences which are supposed to divide mind, the lofty and mysterious, from matter, the lowly and commonplace. The incomprehensibility which is supposed to be peculiar to Spirit (as mind in general is better termed) seems to make it something generically different from matter, which is regarded as obvious and intelligible. Philosophers of course know otherwise, but ordinary folk seldom realise that matter is well-nigh as incomprehensible as Spirit. Yet so it is. The material world is so familiar that the constitution of matter hardly occurs to us as a subject of difficulty. Yet, commonplace

as it may seem, we are quite unable to give any intelligible account of what it is in itself. Are we to regard it as absolutely continuous or solid? Then motion must be impossible. If in order to admit the possibility of motion, we suppose matter to be discrete, that is with spaces between its atoms, the question at once arises, How does it cohere? If to explain cohesion we introduce attraction between the atoms of matter, we have next to explain what this attraction is. If it is material in its nature, all the difficulties of matter attach to it. If it is non-material, it is not to be distinguished from the unknowable spirit. Again, the very notion of an atom, or any ultimate material unit, is inconceivable; for we cannot imagine anything so hard as to resist compression by infinite force, or so small that it cannot conceivably be divided.

With regard to spirit, we readily recognise its incomprehensibility, but we do not always quite realise what this involves. The ultimate constitution of matter may be unintelligible, but matter is known to us phenomenally at any rate; that is to say, we know what it is as it appears to us. Our perceptions of matter may not tell us the whole story, but they do tell us *a* story. I cannot frame any intelligible idea of the inner nature of the table at which I write, but I have a perfectly definite perception of the table phenomenally. Nothing of the kind is possible in the case of spirit. Any attempt to form a conception of spirit breaks down hopelessly; for, though spirit may be a necessary postulate, it is impossible to give it any intelligible contents whatever. It may serve

as a hypothetical source to which to refer our mental and psychical activities, but as an independent immaterial existence it is quite inconceivable. It is, in short, altogether unthinkable unless—and this is important—*we think of it in terms of matter*,—unless, that is to say, we endow it at least with that extension in space which is an essential attribute of matter. In the case of our own minds, we nearly always, consciously or unconsciously, do this; and though we may formally treat spirit as unextended, we practically regard the mind as occupying some extent of space within the body. It may be said that this assumption is merely a pious fiction to bring the mind within the range of practical discussion; but I do not myself take this view, and I think that the assumption embodies not a fiction but a truth. Whatever the ultimate constitution of spirit may be, I think that human minds, and the mind-stuff of which I consider them to be composed, are in the nature of matter, so far, at any rate, as to possess extension.

Many thinkers have been driven to the brink of this conclusion, but most of them have recoiled from it. Mr. Syme, in his recent book on *The Soul*, frankly adopts it; but even Sir William Hamilton, who admitted that we cannot attribute a local seat to the soul without clothing it with the attributes of extension and place, could not finally bring himself to treat the soul as extended, though he was constrained to confess that this refusal made the union of mind and body inexplicable. Probably this reluctance was in most cases due to the supposed baseness

of matter as compared with spirit; but matter is now beginning to shake off the burden of this reproach, and to claim a share with spirit in the birthright of a Divine origin. Philo the Alexandrian taught that God, even in the act of creation, abstained from contact with His work, for "it was not meet that the Wise and Blessed One should touch chaotic and defiled matter." The late Archbishop of Canterbury, in the wider spirit of these days, declared that "we cannot tell, we never can tell, and the Bible never professes to tell, what powers or gifts are wrapped up in matter itself, or in that living matter of which we are made." Moreover, unless human minds and those below them are in some sort material (though their matter be far more delicate than any with which we are yet acquainted), there could be no mental structure in any intelligible sense.

The conclusions which we have now reached plainly involve rather a curious upheaval of the current notions of mind and matter. Mind, the intangible, has been forced to don a garment of matter in order to become an intelligible existence at all. Matter, the solid, has faded under examination into a formlessness as mysterious as that of mind. What then are we to make of the Dualism presented by these twin inconceivabilities? Are they ultimate independent existences, or can they be fused in some synthesis? Various attempts have been made to derive one from the other. On the one hand, mind has been described as a property, or an activity, or even a secretion of matter. On the other, matter has been explained, as by Clifford, to be in

some way a manifestation, or product, or representation of mind or spirit.

There is, however, another, and I think a preferable explanation. Instead of spirit being derived from matter, or matter from spirit, it may be that each of them is a distinct manifestation of the Divine power. We cannot tell through what gradations each manifestation may have passed before reaching the point at which our faculties can apprehend it; and at this comparatively low point it is natural that the two manifestations should seem widely diverse. But, as we have seen, even a slight examination reveals a dim correlation between them, and as the quickened faculties of our future progress bring us nearer to the foundation head, we may expect to find this divergence grow narrower. It is known with practical certainty that matter exists under conditions of far greater tenuity than our senses can apprehend, and recent discoveries point to the conclusion that ponderable can melt into imponderable matter. We cannot tell, we cannot even imagine, what further transformations may take place in imponderable matter as the scale is ascended. For here we should pass into realms of existence which our present faculties could not adequately grasp, and in which even the dimensions of space might be altered.<sup>1</sup> We may feel sure, however, that matter in its highest forms would be much less sharply distinguished from spirit than it is on our present level.

So, too, though spirit and matter have diverged

<sup>1</sup> I understand that four-dimensional space is considered quite possible, in thought, at any rate, by mathematicians.



on their downward paths, they still seem to stretch hands to each other across the gulf. We have followed matter upwards till it has disappeared in that unknown from which spirit also issues. If, with the eye of faith, we try to track spirit in its descent, we can only see the shadowy form of a hypothesis, till, with the human mind, there emerges a presentation of spirit which we can conceive of as extended in space. But even if this conception be disallowed, and the human mind is to be regarded as unextended spirit, it still conforms with strange precision to the laws of matter. It is rigidly limited by material conditions. It can only function in a physical organ, the brain. It requires for its operations, space, cohesion of nerve-tissue, and certain chemical conditions of this tissue. Speaking generally, it varies in power with the size and complexity of the brain, and if this be seriously injured, becomes incapable of operating at all; and finally, since mental no less than physical qualities are capable of hereditary transmission, it is apparently subject to the laws of heredity which physical organisms display.

Thus the Dualism which at first sight looked like the rivalry of antagonists, is now seen to be rather the harmonious co-operation of allies. Spirit and matter rest alike on a Monism which ultimately embraces them both, and though entrusted with different functions, work alike towards the fulfilment of the same end.

## CHAPTER VI

### RIGHT AND WRONG

THE conclusions at which we have now arrived as to the past and future of humanity differ considerably from the popular opinions on the subject ; and we have next to consider whether these conclusions must not also modify our ideas of what should be the principles of man's conduct—whether, in fact, they must not modify the ordinary conceptions of right and wrong. For even if they do not greatly alter our judgments as to what is, and what is not, right conduct, they can hardly fail to alter the standard by which it is to be tested ; they may not affect its denotation, they must affect its connotation. If a protest be made against any attempt to unsettle established beliefs, the answer is that there is no established belief to unsettle ; and the very conflict of opinion on the subject shows that the true criterion of right is yet to seek.

It is admitted on all sides that right and wrong are realities ; but men are quite unable to agree as to what that may be which constitutes their reality, and gives to right or wrong conduct its rightness or wrongness. The question is closely bound up with

various allied questions, such as the sanction of morality, and the origin of our moral ideas ; but it is really distinct from them, and ought to be separately considered.

Speaking broadly, the current opinions on the subject are divided into two groups, which may be described as the transcendental and the experiential groups. According to the transcendental group, that which is right is so constituted by the direct will of God. Under this view the right derives its rightness solely from the Divine *fiat*, and has no necessary relation to the consequences which may spring from right conduct. Such consequences may be indeed beneficial to the agent or to the community at large, but the conduct is right, not because of its consequences, but because it is pleasing to God. The principles of this transcendental right are made known to man either by Divine revelation, as theologians maintain, or, according to Intuitionist philosophers, through an innate moral faculty, which enables men at once to apprehend the distinction between the right and the wrong, and the superior worth of the right. The experiential group, on the other hand, place the test of right conduct in its consequences ; holding that conduct which tends to promote the happiness of the individual or the community, as the case may be, is right because of this tendency and only because of it. Alter the consequences, and the moral quality of the conduct will be altered also.

It is only necessary here to touch quite briefly on the chief objections which are urged against these

respective theories. With regard to the transcendental view, the theory that the arbitrary will of God is the sole basis of the right, has been described as one which annihilates the goodness of God and the virtue of man. But apart from this, even if Divine revelation as to the right and wrong were much clearer and more explicit than it can possibly be shown to be, it fails to account for the existence of moral ideas anterior to any such revelation ; while the Intuitionist theory of an innate moral sense in man is manifestly incompatible with facts. For the moral sense which civilised man possesses simply does not exist among savages, and therefore cannot be an original endowment of the human race. M. Réville (*History of the Devil*, p. 5) tells us that—

“A Bushman, when invited by a missionary, who had instilled into him some notions of morality, to give a few proofs that he could distinguish between right and wrong, said, ‘It is wrong for another man to come and take away my wives ; it is right for me to go and take his.’”

This is not a case of a false standard of morality, which education could rectify, but of the absence of a moral sense altogether. The savage did not merely misapprehend the limits of right and wrong, he was entirely unable to appreciate the distinction between them.

The experientialists can make out a much stronger case for their theory. In a very large number of instances the right and the useful do coincide. Conduct which all parties would agree in pronouncing right does in the main promote happiness : conduct

which everybody would agree to be wrong does in the main promote unhappiness. But notwithstanding the general coincidence of virtue with happiness and vice with unhappiness, there are substantial exceptions which cannot be brought under the rule. Moreover, these exceptions bring into prominence the fact that, though duty and happiness may often coincide, most people do, rightly or wrongly, regard them as essentially distinct from each other. It is felt that the right differs in quality from the expedient; and in the case of conduct which we regard as wrong, we feel that no considerations of expediency could alter its character. To this experientialists will reply, that the modern ideas of right and wrong are rooted in ancestral experiences of pleasure and pain, which have crystallised into generalisations. Thus the disagreeable consequences of murder in early societies having given rise to the generalisation that murder is inexpedient, this comes down to us in later times as an apparently intuitive law of conduct—Do no murder—independently of the unpleasant experiences which gave rise to it. There is a good deal to be said in favour of this explanation, and it is probably correct in referring our present moral ideas to an experiential origin. But by itself it hardly explains the qualitative distinction which is felt to exist between the right and the expedient. It does not very clearly show how a prudential maxim can grow into a moral law. It may show us wherein our profit lies, but it cannot give us the notion of duty. This question, however, is more fully dealt with in Chapter VIII.

It seems therefore that none of our ethical systems give a satisfactory account of the moral distinctions which we nevertheless feel to be profoundly real, and that if a better explanation is to be found it must be sought elsewhere.

Speaking broadly, I think that this failure is due to their restricted scope of the whole question. In the first place, it may be said of them generally that they either have no definite eschatology, or else an eschatology which is profoundly unacceptable to modern thought. The systems which are independent of orthodoxy profess, at best, a vague belief in an existence and, perhaps, a progress for man after death, but rarely attempt to frame any definite theory on the subject. The orthodox systems have, no doubt, a most precise eschatology, but it is one which has been discarded by all serious outside thought, and—in its cruder forms at any rate—is rapidly losing its hold on the belief of the faithful. This is a grave defect, because, without a satisfactory eschatology, it is impossible to approach a true conception of what is the essence of right and wrong. A complete conception of this would require a knowledge of the future which is obviously beyond our reach ; but the broader we can make our survey, the nearer to the truth shall we attain.

We may see even in temporal matters how our moral judgments vary with the extent of the field which they cover. What would be deemed reckless improvidence for a lad with his life before him, may well be permitted to an old man sinking into his grave. If an invalid with a raging thirst clamours



for water, a morality which restricts its attention to the moment would pronounce it right for the bystander to satisfy the craving. Yet this judgment might be reversed by a longer vision which perceived that the draught would be fatal. And if this principle be true for the limited conditions of our present life, *a fortiori* is it applicable to our existence beyond the grave. For we can hardly attempt to decide what we ought *to do*, until we have formed some opinion as to what we are going *to be*. For instance, if our after-life is to be that of the mediæval heaven, the only proper preparation for it is the life of a religious recluse; and a great deal of conduct which we now pronounce good we should have to regard as morally indifferent or bad. Or, again, if eternal punishment is to be the doom of the transgressions of a lifetime, it is impossible for us to adapt to any of our present conceptions of right the atrocious wrong of such arrangement. If benevolence, justice, and mercy are right, they cannot have a common essence with the cruelty and injustice of eternal damnation. If we turn to the independent philosophies, our estimate of what our conduct should be on the assumption that we survive death as personal existences, must differ from that which we should form on the assumption that our personalities are to be absorbed into the universal spirit.

In other respects, too, the outlook of our ethical systems is too narrow. We are apt to limit the sphere of right conduct to human relations only, without sufficiently considering whether the scheme

of things in which we find ourselves may not include other purposes besides human evolution. To take a single instance, it is at least possible that in our dealings with the lower animals, there may be questions of right and wrong involved of which we have hardly yet dreamed.<sup>1</sup> The same anthropocentric prejudice has coloured our views of the moral administration of the world. Regarding right and wrong as matters with which mankind alone is concerned, we have given to their precepts the form of human ordinances, whose administration is confined to a sort of moral law court, armed with powers of punishment and reward.

To solve the problem completely is beyond our present powers; but though the goal be out of sight, it may be possible for us to strike the right road to it. To do this, however, we must widen our horizon, and, facing the facts boldly, look before and after as well as our faculties permit. Our postulates, as it will be remembered, are that we form part of a scheme of evolution, and that this scheme is subject to Divine guidance. No theist need deny these postulates, and we require no others. The scheme being evolutionary, all its manifestations must be credited with a past as well as a future; and thus in the case of man, a consummation which may be Godlike will relate back to a most lowly origin, through stages linked together by an inviolate order. Such is the career to which we must look for the test of human right and wrong, not to the brief

<sup>1</sup> Hartley and some of the earlier utilitarians have touched the question, but only superficially.

period of our present life, which, according to current doctrines, has an absolute blank behind it, and before it a future of eternal immutability or inscrutable darkness.

But even this survey, though it may suffice for the requirements of human morality, is not wide enough for the ascertainment of right and wrong in reference to the whole scheme. In this larger sense, right and wrong must obviously be correlated with the purposes of the scheme as a whole, and consequently in reference to conduct, *right may be defined as that which directly promotes these purposes, and wrong as that which directly retards them*. I say *directly*, because all the energies manifested in the scheme are related to its end, and must directly or indirectly contribute to its attainment. But while some of these swell the main onward impulse which moves directly towards the end, others, to wit those which are associated with wrong conduct, are temporarily opposed to it, and their value lies in the salutary reactions produced by the failure of their misdirected efforts. In this way pain and evil generally minister indirectly to the due fulfilment of the scheme's purpose, by heading off, as it were, energies striving to expend themselves in mistaken directions.

No doubt we cannot as yet apprehend all the purposes comprised in the scheme, but a great step is gained when once we realise that these cannot be limited to the evolution of humanity alone. It is as certain as anything of the sort well can be, that the scheme must also comprise a system of

animal, and a system of vegetable, evolution ; and in the realm of inorganic matter, recent discoveries in radio-activity point to the possibility of some vast transitional process whereby the ponderable melts into the imponderable. More than this, even in the intellectual and spiritual spheres, we cannot safely assume that the scheme is concerned with the development of man alone. It is at least possible that man is not the highest thing in our universe, and that unknown to us there are intelligent beings comprised therein, whose faculties transcend our own. In any case, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that other systems of evolution on this globe are interlaced with our own. Right, then, in this wider application to the whole mundane order, must be directly related to the harmonious interaction of all these systems at their various points of contact, and the unimpeded progress of each of them along its own proper path. Human conduct can no longer be regarded as having no moral significance outside the limits of human development, since it may have a bearing also on other coexistent systems. Thus, to take a simple instance, right in its fullest sense will be concerned, not only with the promotion of human development, but also with the due evolution of bird or flower.

It will be said, no doubt, that such a criterion of right and wrong is hopelessly impracticable, since nothing certain can be known of the future of human evolution, and we can hardly even guess at the conditions of any other system. The objection may be frankly allowed its full weight, but it does not

really affect the main question. We cannot indeed form any conception of right and wrong in reference to facts which are beyond our knowledge. But though the existence of such facts may prevent us from making our conception wide enough, our recognition of this limitation may save us from making it needlessly narrow. The only attempt here made is to indicate what the principle of rightness is; and it is quite possible to apprehend this without a full and immediate knowledge of all its applications.

Nor need we be disturbed by our present ignorance, for this will be gradually enlightened as the scheme unfolds; and nothing but the truth can finally emerge, since the scheme will not permit any moral codes to survive which are permanently antagonistic to the attainment of its end. Knowledge will grow as our evolution advances, and this increased knowledge cannot fail to modify our existing conceptions, including our conceptions of right and wrong. Indeed, the test of right and wrong must always vary with the requirements of each successive stage of evolution. The ethics of a military and of an industrial community, for instance, must differ from each other, yet each in its own line is working out some purpose of the scheme, and though the tests of right which they respectively set up are diverse, each in its own sphere is as valid as the other. For the present, then, we may safely be content to walk by such light as we possess, provided only that we are ever watchful for any new beam which may fall on our path.

Finally, though this account of right differs from

those of the current ethical theories, it has something in common with them all. Like that of the Experientialists, it finds the test of right in the effects of conduct, but with the Intuitionists it holds that right is a Divinely constituted element in the scheme of things, and is inseparably bound up with its purposes. And herein lies the explanation of our instinctive feeling that the right and the wrong are something distinct from the profitable and the unprofitable. For the greater worth which we ascribe to the right has a purely personal basis. Right conduct is to me the more worthy because *I* deem it the more worthy, and deem it the more worthy of *me*: it is that which responds to the demands of the most highly developed part of my nature; though it may seem to threaten a temporary disadvantage, it is the better realisation of my true self. Wrong conduct, on the other hand, is the less worthy because in one way or another it places me in a position of inferiority, moral or material, either with regard to my fellows, or with regard to my better self. And all this is but our dawning recognition of the truth that, in pursuing the right, we are promoting our own development, and thereby fulfilling our share of the purposes of the scheme of which human evolution is a part. It is true that all our moral laws were in the first instance prudential maxims only, to which men were guided by Experience, the great schoolmaster of the scheme. But by degrees their moral value was revealed to the keener intelligence of a higher stage of development. They are expedient, indeed, because they tend to



promote human evolution ; but they are also right, because that evolution is one of the purposes of the scheme.

And when once we have recognised that right is part of the Divine scheme of things, and directly related to its purposes, many of the doubts and difficulties which haunt the current eschatologies disappear. There is no need, for instance, of any tribunal to punish or reward, for there can be no place for judgment in the universal triumph of the right. We must all struggle through many a stage of imperfection to that perfection which we hold to be our destined end, but every one of us will attain it. Imperfection may seem obstinate, but it cannot permanently endure ; for final imperfection would mean failure, and the Divine purpose cannot fail. The everlasting punishment which, nominally at any rate, forms part of the orthodox eschatology, involves an endless perpetuation of evil, which would stand as an eternal monument of Divine impotence or imperfection. But for the universalism which actually holds that belief in the Divine governance of things which all religious creeds profess, the promise of reward seems superfluous, and the threat of punishment meaningless. The Divine purpose will find its reward in its own fulfilment, and punishment can have no place in the unstained perfection by which that fulfilment will be crowned.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SANCTION OF MORALITY

WE have seen that the current ethical theories fail to give any satisfactory explanation of moral distinctions. They tell us—and accurately enough up to a certain point—what is right, and what wrong, but they fail to explain *why* right is right, and wrong is wrong. For practical purposes this defect is not, perhaps, of the first importance. Though the rival schools proceed from different premisses, they arrive at substantially the same conclusion as to what conduct should be, and the rules of conduct which they lay down amply suffice to indicate what our duty is. But the idea of duty implies an obligation; and if we proceed to inquire wherein this obligation consists, what are the penalties by which it will be enforced, or, in technical language, what are “the sanctions” of the moral law, we find ourselves confronted with a formidable difficulty. Where pleasure and duty conflict, why is a man to sacrifice the former to the latter? or, if he declines to make this sacrifice, what are the penalties which will avenge his neglect of duty?

Without going too deeply into this much dis-

cussed problem, it will suffice to say that the various penalties usually suggested as the sanctions of morality may be roughly classed under three heads :

1. *External* : public or private retaliation. But this penalty attaches only to acts which affect others besides the agent, and only then in the case of such acts being discovered. It does not touch offences which only affect the wrong-doer. Obviously, therefore, it is quite inadequate as a moral sanction.

2. *Internal* : the dissatisfaction caused by an immoral act to the better feelings or the higher self of the wrong-doer. This penalty, however, presupposes the initial existence of a high state of moral development, and therefore can have no application to the beginnings of that development. Moreover, as a sanction, it fails just where its efficacy is most required. It will have few terrors for a man with a low moral sense ; yet this is the man who is most likely to commit immoral actions.

3. *Religious* : Divine punishment. *Practically*, this involves the acceptance of the doctrine of eternal perdition, which, in its unqualified form at any rate, is almost universally discredited.

Since, then, the ordinary theories of ethics supply no satisfactory sanctions for the morality which they inculcate, is there any better sanction to be found for the morality which declares right to be that which directly promotes the purposes of the Divine scheme of which we form part, and wrong to be that which directly retards it ? I think that such a sanction or rather body of sanctions will be found in what may be called Natural Requit. By this is

meant requitals which lie in the natural consequences of conduct. It is, in fact, a special instance of the familiar law of natural causation. Seeing that every event produces an inevitable effect, and that the energy manifested in both cause and effect is imperishable, we must regard all the phenomena of the universe as manifestations of energy inseparably united to each other in a system of perfect and all-pervading causation. The most trifling motion is rooted in the past and will stretch its branches into an illimitable future. Nothing happens by accident; nothing fails by mischance. The flicker of an eyelash or the fall of a leaf is as rigidly determined in the operations of the universe as the stupendous processions of its suns. And in like manner human conduct, in its widest sense, including thoughts and desires not necessarily externalised in action, will be followed by its natural and inevitable results.

These results constitute, or at any rate provide, the natural requital which is the sanction of our morality. Its operation is not excluded from our present existence, but its real efficacy lies in the fact that it will follow conduct into the future. It will include all external penalties by which misconduct can be visited, but it will make itself felt more particularly in the internal effects of conduct on the character of the agent. No conscious act, thought, or mental operation whatever takes place without leaving its mark on the character which gave it birth. But the character is really the Ego or soul in a more familiar aspect, and will carry into the future life all the impressions produced on it by the indi-

vidual's conduct in this life. Such impressions will represent or correlate with corresponding tendencies or habits of conduct. It is on these habits that natural requital will operate, and, where they are opposed to the purpose of the Divine scheme, will be felt in the painful friction which this opposition must produce. The mills of God grind slowly, and it may perchance take more than one life stage to wear down a stubborn immoral habit; but they grind exceeding small, and in the end, natural requital, patient, inexorable, just, will purge the character of its offending qualities, and restore it to that harmony with the Divine purpose wherein alone its true happiness is to be found.

It will be seen, then, that in natural requital our morality has a sanction which can never fail, and must always be accurately adjusted to the needs of every case. It thus avoids many of the perplexities with which the ordinary ethical systems are beset. Where a wrong act has been committed on meritorious but mistaken principles, as for instance the murder of Cæsar by Brutus, it is extremely difficult, under these systems, to arrive at a true estimate of the act or its appropriate penalty. Is the test to be the quality of the act, or the quality of the agent, or both; and if so, how are they to be adjusted? But under natural requital the matter is simple. The test in its ultimate form will be whether the act on the whole promotes or retards the Divine purpose; and this test, while it is not confined either to the quality of the act or the quality of the agent, embraces them both. There can be no tampering with

the order of the Divine scheme, and therefore no conduct which is opposed to the scheme can escape its natural requital. But inasmuch as natural requital operates chiefly within the agent's own being, the intention of his conduct will have its full weight in modifying the character of the requital.

So too with the difficulties which arise where the same misdeed is committed by persons differently situated. For example, a millionaire and a man with a starving family each steal a sovereign. How are their respective guilts to be estimated? What are the moral sanctions with which they should be respectively visited? Such questions are incalculable under the popular ethical systems, but the matter is adjusted automatically by natural requital. The man who steals only to save his children from starvation commits an act which, though immoral, will not produce any deep deterioration of character, or go far towards establishing a vicious diathesis. The requitals, therefore, which he will encounter will be comparatively light. With the millionaire it will be very different. His theft was prompted, not by any desperate necessity, but merely by the desire to gratify a vicious tendency, which, growing stronger at every surrender to its demands, will, by its very strength, provoke sharp requitals in the hereafter.

In some other respects also natural requital differs from the moral sanctions above referred to. Natural requital is, as we have seen, inevitable in its operation, a feature by which it is distinguished from the religious sanction of Divine punishment.



For with regard to this there is a belief that the Deity may, and on occasion will, temper justice with mercy, and remit the penalties which the offender would otherwise incur. This doctrine is at once the strength and the weakness of the moral system of orthodoxy. It appeals strongly to sinners by the hope which it offers of their sins being condoned in consideration of a due repentance. But it also seriously weakens the sanctions of its moral code, by teaching that repentance can avert or mitigate them. In nature, on the other hand, there is no such thing as the forgiveness of sins, nor, it may be added, the forgiveness of mistakes. If there were, the moral order of the universe would become chaos. Every act produces its own inevitable effects, which no repentance can alter or avert. But though it is necessary to insist upon this, we ought not therefore to overlook the value of repentance. Seeing that the chief arena of natural requital is in the individual, it is obvious that anything which modifies the character must modify also the requitals which it elicits. Regarded in this light, repentance is seen to be an influence of immense importance. The power of strong emotion to work rapid and seemingly miraculous bodily effects is well known; and just as (to take a single instance) a sudden fit of anger may dispel an attack of gout, so the spiritual convulsion of a deep repentance may work in a day changes of character which years of exhortation have failed to effect. Nevertheless, repentance is strictly a matter of causation, and as rigidly determined as any other event. It cannot be summoned

or banished by any spontaneous effort of will; it can only occur in the orderly course of events.

There is another point to be noticed in this connection, which is sometimes unduly ignored. I have said that there is no forgiveness of mistakes in nature; and I think it is necessary to emphasise this, because some religious teachers are accustomed to magnify the value of piety to the practical exclusion of intelligence. It is impossible to suppose, however, that mere piety in the ordinary sense can be the only, or even the chief, condition of our future development. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Ignorance is made to go by a byway into hell; and the lesson of the old allegory may in this sense be profoundly true, that the hereafter will demand of us intellectual fully as much as religious progress. Indeed, in strictness, the two cannot really be severed. Given a certain intellectual advance, and religion must follow in its train, under the penalty of being excluded from the sphere of human interests altogether.

It will now be evident, I think, that natural requital is a moral sanction of far greater power than any of those furnished by other theories of morality. So far as the conscious anticipation of penalty is an active impulse to moral conduct, there can be no question but that a system of *inevitable* and accurately graduated penalties, such as natural requital threatens, must, when once recognised, have a vastly greater effect on conduct than the empty menaces of philosophical moralists, or the fear of a hell which may always be escaped by a timely

repentance. So far, again, as morality springs from obedience to principles which, though originally evolved from experience, have now become practically intuitive, the doctrine of natural requital adds to morality a new dignity and a higher sanctity, by treating it as an inherent part of the Divine scheme of nature, not as a code imposed from without. Moreover, though natural requital implies inevitable penalty, it also implies inevitable reward. If nature holds out no hope of any remission of sins, she threatens us with no doom of eternal torture, and through her gates of death we see the bright beams of morning, instead of the lurid glare of hell. So too, by placing the sanction of morality inside, not outside of nature, natural requital gives morality its true position in the order of things, while it extends its scope from the narrow realm of earthly life to the whole course of the soul's development. Sacerdotalism has, in the past, done much to sever religion from morals by its attempts to exalt the value of correct theological belief at the expense of practical morality; but such a severance is ultimately impossible. The morally right being that which accords with the broad course of evolution in nature, and the morally wrong that which conflicts with it, any conduct (in the widest sense of the term) which impedes the soul's development stands proclaimed as an offence against natural morality. But when nature itself is regarded as a Divine scheme, an offence against natural morality is seen to be also an offence against natural religion.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SENSE OF SIN

IN the discussion in Chapter VI. on the nature of Right and Wrong, it was pointed out as an objection to the experientialist theory of morals, that though the dictates of virtue and those of utility often coincide, they are never confounded; that though duty and happiness may frequently coalesce, we cannot but feel that they are qualitatively distinct from each other; that the profitable is not necessarily identical with the right; and that, though expediency may supply us with a "*must*," it cannot give us an "*ought*." The truth of this distinction is frequently said to be attested by that sense of sin which accompanies the breach of a moral law.

It is urged, and with considerable force, that the feeling of guilt which follows the commission of an act regarded as wrong is never present among the feelings which ensue on a mere disregard of the dictates of utility; and this, it is said, furnishes a conclusive proof that the idea of the right is generically different from the idea of the useful.

Up to a certain point this argument seems unanswerable. Whatever be the origin to which

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we may trace these ideas respectively, it is undeniable that, as ideas, they are now clearly distinct. An immoral act may be inexpedient; it may even, in the last analysis, be immoral *because* it is, in the widest sense, inexpedient; but when we condemn it as immoral, we test it by a standard of rightness and wrongness, not by a standard of expediency and inexpediency. So far, then, the Intuitionist claim may be allowed. But when Intuitionists proceed to argue from this that the idea of right is an eternal principle which is wholly outside and independent of the evolutionary development of man, they get on to much less certain ground. There is no adequate proof of any *supernatural* Divine revelation of the right, and it is pretty clear that humanity in its lowest stages has no innate moral ideas. On the other hand, the Experientialists fail altogether in their attempt to trace the sense of sin to any of the *direct* considerations of the expediency in which they place the ultimate source of our morality. The primitive man is taught originally to avoid certain classes of conduct by dread of the penalties which his fellows will inflict on him. But with regard to the sense of sin, it is clear that this is wholly independent of any external penalties whatever. Indeed, it attaches to many acts for which no external penalties are possible, acts which do not injure the community, but whose injurious effects are confined to the individual. No dread of punishment calls it into life; no immunity from punishment can rob it of its sting. If, therefore, it is to fall into place as

an orderly product of evolution, some other origin must be assigned to it.

I venture to think that this origin is to be found, not in the dread of punishment which the community will or may exact for the misdeed, but in the associations connected with a somewhat different source of dissatisfaction. It appears to me that it springs originally from, and even now ultimately rests on, *the sense of inferiority*, which is one of the indirect results of the violation of a maxim either of social or self-regarding morality. When an immoral act is committed—be it a wrong to the community, or a wrong to the individuality of the sinner—there follows a feeling that we should somehow be in a better position, a worthier position, if the act had not been committed. This feeling is not due to any fear of what the community may exact in retribution, but rests ultimately on a primitive experience that, omitting all consideration of direct punishment, an act of immorality places us at a disadvantage with our neighbours in the struggle for existence. In confirmation of this view, I would point out that the *differentia* of the sense of sin is the peculiar sting which it inflicts, and which is utterly beyond the power of mere penalties, however heavy, to produce. And it is precisely this sting which is one of the most marked effects of the feeling of inferiority, as may be seen by a comparison of the torments produced by jealousy, which is another form under which a sense of inferiority, real or imaginary, is expressed.

There can be little doubt, I think, that this sense



of inferiority made its appearance at a very early stage in the moral development of man. The first determinants of action are the pleasures and pains attending the various kinds of conduct possible to primitive man. The dread of retaliation was the first deterrent against the commission of an injury to his neighbours or to the community. The next stage was reached when injurious actions, originally shunned on account of their consequences, gradually became classed as things to be avoided in themselves. At this point the maxims of morality became absolute laws so far as the individual was concerned, because in addition to the external penalties which their violation involved, their observance was further enforced by the internal sanction of a subjective feeling in their favour, of which a painful breach was caused by a vicious action. It is true that the real origin of the maxim became in this way partially obscured, the maxim having survived more prominently than the reason for it; but none the less was its binding force derived from a conviction that in obeying it men ministered in some way to their own welfare.

In modern times a neglect of personal welfare may be largely counterbalanced by accidental advantages, such as inherited wealth, the assistance of powerful friends, and so forth; but in early communities not only was the struggle for existence much more severe, but the fortune of every individual depended almost exclusively on his own capabilities and conduct. In such a community any neglect or violation of the conditions of success would be

followed rigorously by its natural consequences. Cowardice or treachery in battle against the common foe, or a breach of such rude faith as might obtain between savages, would bring immediate retribution in the shape of retaliatory injuries. But, in addition to these, there would be a further punishment in store for the offender, in the fact that his past misdeeds would stand in the way of his future advancement. The coward or traitor, if not killed outright, would be deprived of his share of future spoils, as well as of any prospect of pre-eminence in his clan, with the concomitant privileges and benefits which such pre-eminence might confer. In the same way, the perpetrator of a private injury would find himself thwarted, not only by the animosities which his misconduct had kindled, but by the withdrawal of the confidence (however rudimentary it might be) of those whom he had injured. At this stage any extensive failure of the external penalties which accompanied misdeeds might, no doubt, have caused a disappearance of the feeling that such acts were bad even in the absence of penalties; in which case the internal sanctions, including the sense of inferiority, must have perished also. But our knowledge, so far as it goes, of the conditions of primitive society forbids us to suppose that such a failure can have taken place. We may therefore reasonably conclude that the sense of inferiority is at least as early as the first growth of the feeling that injurious acts are *mala in se*, apart from the external penalties which may attend them.

If this be so, it is easy to understand the wide scope as well as the immense strength of the sense of inferiority. The moment the conception of immorality as an evil apart from its consequences arises in the human mind, the sense of inferiority springs up by its side, an ever present and ever watchful guardian of the moral law, a prophet and an avenger, whose warnings are heard in the voice of conscience, and whose vengeance is experienced in the pangs of remorse. When this stage of moral progress has been reached, the certainty of external retribution becomes of less importance, so far as the individual is concerned, to the due maintenance of the moral sense; for whether a particular breach of moral law be detected or not, the sense of inferiority rises up unfailingly in judgment against the offender. Moreover, it is a requital which is specially effective in the case of those misdeeds which are offences, not against others, but against the higher nature of the offender. Some of these misdeeds, if they are openly committed, may no doubt be visited with the penalty of social censure. But our secret sins can only be arraigned at the bar of conscience, and the gravest penalty which that tribunal can inflict is to brand them as unworthy.

It is this omnipresence and continuity of operation which constitutes one great source of the strength of the feeling of inferiority. The other is to be found in the desire and dread of power, which are feelings common to all humanity, and which are peculiarly prominent among the less civilised races. The reverence of power is sufficiently intelligible under social

conditions where might was practically right, and physical conditions which confronted the slender resources of primitive man with the stupendous and untamed energy of the forces of nature. But, without dwelling longer on the origin of this reverence, it is necessary to touch briefly on its relation to the sense of inferiority now under discussion. The reverence of power, as I have said, combined the two elements of dread and desire, and to each of these the sense of inferiority lent an imposing force. The desire of power naturally led to a desire of the means of attaining it. These obviously consisted of excellence of all kinds, including, of course, moral excellence, however scanty the content of the term may have been. Similarly, power being an object of dread as a hostile external influence, every form of inferiority, moral or otherwise, diminished the individual's capacity for resisting its attacks.

Thus it will be seen that the consequences of inferiority are not limited to any class of offences, or to a single definite penalty which may or may not be avoided, but include all the possible injuries which can result to the organism from an imperfect adaptation to its environment. And its efficacy as a requital lies not only in the wide range of external evils with which it threatens the individual, but in the inward torments of the peculiar sting by which it is normally accompanied.

Such I conceive to be the origin, and such the justification of the sense of sin. Other explanations, as we have seen, either fail to account for its evolution in the scheme of nature, or treat it as a

miraculous element outside the scheme altogether. Whereas, if the explanation which I have suggested be true, the sense of sin falls duly into its place as an orderly product of moral evolution. There is also a final consideration on which I would dwell for a moment. I have deprecated the idea of the sense of sin being a *supernatural* revelation ; but, regarded as a *natural* revelation, it harmonises completely with what seems to be the trend of the purpose of our scheme. For, looking at human evolution as a whole, we see that moral development has steadily been replacing ideals of gratification by ideals of worth ; and as the idea emerges of worth to be attained, the antithesis which inevitably grows up by its side is the idea of inferiority to be shunned.

## CHAPTER IX

### FREE-WILL, DETERMINISM, AND MORALITY

IN the preceding chapters I have attempted to indicate the line of man's development, physically, intellectually, and morally, from the point of view that he forms part of a great scheme of evolution, Divinely inspired and regulated by an inflexible order. And we are now bound to face one of the gravest moral problems of his existence. Right and wrong, good and bad, may be intelligible descriptions of conduct in its relation to the general scheme; but can they have any application to conduct in its relation to the *agent* unless he is responsible for such conduct? And as to this it is asked, on the one hand, How can moral responsibility, or indeed morality, be possible without free-will? On the other, How can free-will be compatible with the inviolate causation which appears to prevail through the universe? These are the questions which we have now to consider, and round which rages the conflict between Libertarians and Determinists.

It must be admitted at once that freedom of the will is fundamentally irreconcilable with any theory which regards creation as permeated by a Divinely



constituted order. We must therefore frankly accept the doctrine of Determinism, and proceed to inquire whether it really leads to the results with which Libertarians threaten us. For it is significant of the stage which has now been reached in the controversy, that the Libertarian arguments are chiefly directed, not so much to proving the truth of the free-will theory, as to pointing out the consequences, or supposed consequences, of rejecting it. They insist that without free-will moral responsibility is impossible, and that if moral responsibility disappears, then the distinction of right and wrong, the meaning of praise and blame, and the belief in the moral government of the world, will disappear also. The Determinist, in fact, is, or ought to be, a person for whom moral distinctions are impossible, and duty and conscience meaningless. Libertarians no doubt admit that many Determinists are much better than their creed; but this they regard merely as a triumph of the heart over the head, holding that any moral merits which Determinism may shelter can only have crept in through the defects in its logic. These are not very strong arguments, but they may weigh unduly with ordinary folk, who do not concern themselves greatly with philosophy, but who naturally shrink from a theory which they are told strikes at the root of morals and religion. I shall therefore endeavour, without going deeper than is necessary into philosophical technicalities, to show that a moral and religious faith is not solely the heritage of Libertarians, and that a belief in man's moral responsibility to his fellows, in the distinction of right and

wrong, and in the moral government of the world, is perfectly compatible with a Determinist conception of man's conduct, story, and destiny. I go no further than this. I do not say that all Determinists must, or do, hold these beliefs, but I do say that any Determinist may hold them; and if this be established it will be sufficient for my purpose.

Without attempting to discuss the controversy in detail, it is necessary to state shortly the issues with which it is concerned. The question is complicated at the outset by the fact that Libertarians are not agreed among themselves as to what free-will means. They are divided in the first place into two rival sects, the Indeterminists and the Self-determinists, who differ from each other acutely; while the Self-determinists are again subdivided into opposing sects. It would be impossible for me here to deal with these differences exhaustively; I can only attempt to sketch them in outline. The Indeterminists declare that the Will is not determined by motives, and that a man can, by means of some mysterious power, which can choose between motives without being dependent on any of them, set aside a stronger in favour of a weaker motive, or, indeed, can disregard motives altogether. The Self-determinists, on the other hand, assert that all action is determined by the strongest motive, but that it is the Self which decides which of all the competing motives shall be the strongest. Indeterminism is, I think beyond doubt, the form of free-will which is held by mankind at large, but it is condemned by all sects of Self-determinism.

The late Professor Green points out that

"however we may try to give meaning to the assertion that an act of will is a choice without a motive, we cannot do so. Unless there is an object which a man seeks or avoids in doing an act, there is no act of will. Thus a motive is necessary to make such an act" (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 103).

Mr. Illingworth observes :

"Everyone knows that it (free-will) neither means a motiveless nor a limitless will; and yet on both points there is still a great deal of confusion. . . . It is universally agreed that human conduct is determined by motives, and the only question is whence these motives are derived" (*The Divine Immanence*, p. 192).

And Mr. Shadworth Hodgson says of it :

"Their (the Indeterminists) Ego, taken literally, and as they mean it to be taken, is a non-entity, and involves the inconceivable idea of action originated *ex nihilo*" ("Free-will: an Analysis," *Mind*, vol. xvi. p. 165).

I may here observe that the difference between the Indeterminists and the Self-determinists is more apparent than real. Obviously there is no practical distinction between an unmotivated power of willing, and an unmotivated power of selecting a motive to determine the will. The late Mr. Sidgwick, in his *Ethics of Green, Spencer, and Martineau*, neatly points out that Self-determinists try "to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, and to get the

moral satisfaction of a Libertarian view together with the scientific satisfaction of a Determinist view" (p. 17).

The fact is that the theory of Self-determinism is a knife-edge, on which the mind cannot balance itself securely. Sooner or later it must topple over either into Determinism or Indeterminism. But even assuming that the position of Self-determinism is logically tenable, there is the further difficulty that Self-determinists differ considerably among themselves as to the nature of the Self, the character of the process of Self-determination, and the nature and origin of the strongest motive.

Passing therefore to the Self-determinists, I will take the three writers I have just quoted, as representing Self-determinism from their respective standpoints, and shortly indicate their divergences of opinion. And first with regard to the Self. Mr. Green regards this as transcendental in its nature, something which is the reproduction of an eternal self-consciousness, existing out of time, which is a free cause, and which, though distinct from, is not isolated from feelings, desire, and thoughts, but is that which unites them, or which they become as united in the character of an agent who is an object to himself (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, §§ 99-101, 106). Mr. Illingworth takes a somewhat similar view, regarding the Self as a permanent metaphysical something which can stand apart from the various thoughts and desires which come into the mind (*The Divine Immanence*, pp. 192-3).

Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, however, differs sharply.

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He will have nothing to do with an immaterial Self, an abstract or transcendental mind or Ego, something of which we have no positive knowledge, and which, so far as our knowledge goes, is an unreality (*Mind*, vol. xvi. p. 164). This he calls a "shadow man," and rejects as "an hypostatized word" (*ib.* 165). For him the Self is "the neuro-cerebral system with its physical adjuncts, whatever these may turn out to be" (*ib.* 165).<sup>1</sup>

Then as to the process of Self-determination. According to Mr. Green, this consists in the Self adopting from out of the desires presented to it, one which tends to the realisation of some personal good; and so far as this adoption is the work of the transcendental Self, it is a process which is outside the realm of natural law. According to Mr. Illingworth, the Self stands apart from the various motives which appeal to it, and then chooses from among them the one which it elects to follow.

"At the moment of action we undoubtedly follow the strongest motive—but it does not become the strongest till we have made it so by our previous act of choice; and that act of choice is an act of pure self-assertion. *I* will make this my motive. *I* will identify *myself* with this" (*The Divine Immanence*, p. 193).

Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, on the other hand, holds that the Self exercises in volition a self-deter-

<sup>1</sup> It is right to add that Mr. Hodgson expressly admits that this view of the Self does not solve the question as to how, or by what hidden nexus, consciousness becomes attached to a physical agent (*Mind*, vol. xvi. p. 166).

mining power of choice, but it is one which is strictly determined by its own nature.

"In whichever way, then, we conceive the nature of the agent, Determinists (*i.e.* Self-determinists)<sup>1</sup> need not hesitate to admit that he exercises, in volition, a self-determining power. What they deny is, that he exercises in volition a power of choice which is not determined by his nature, that is, by himself" ("Dr. Ward on Free-will" (by Hodgson), *Mind*, vol. v. p. 246).

This view, however, Mr. Illingworth emphatically repudiates :

"Self-determination, therefore, is simply a more accurately descriptive name for what is commonly called free-will ; and its accent, so to speak, is upon the 'self.' But various necessitarians have caught it up and changed its accent on to the 'determination.' Self-determination, they say, means the fact of being determined by self, used as a synonym for character ; and is thus only a particular form of determinism ; human conduct being as necessarily determined by character as material motion by external force. Now this is exactly what the phrase in question does not mean, and was never intended to mean by those who introduced its use. Self as synonymous with person or self-conscious subject, *as such*, is quite distinct from self as synonymous with character, or developed personality, . . . and it is in the former sense, and not the latter, that the word is used in the phrase self-determination. It denotes the power that we possess, as self-conscious beings, of selecting our own motives, and so determining

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hodgson calls Self-determinists "Determinists," and Determinists "Compulsory Determinists."



our conduct, and through our conduct our character. Of course we have the rudiments of a character, in the shape of disposition and temperament, to start with; and as this character grows, its influence on our conduct increases. But so far is this influence from being equivalent to self-determination in the proper sense of the term, that we may say with strict accuracy that, in proportion as our character determines us, we are not self-determined; we do not act as selves, consciously using our power of choice" (*The Divine Immanence*, pp. 193-4).

And here, in turn, Mr. Green disagrees with Mr. Illingworth, holding that

"just so far as an action is determined by character, it is determined by an object which the agent has consciously made his own, and has come to make his own in consequence of actions similarly determined. He is thus conscious of being the author of the act; he imputes it to himself" (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 108).

Finally, with regard to the nature and origin of the strongest motive. According to Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, the self reacts upon the motives presented to it, and this reaction takes the form of a selective attention, under which one of the alternate desires is retained and intensified, while the others are weakened and disappear (*Mind*, vol. x. p. 549; vol. xvi. p. 171). The desire so retained becomes the strongest motive and determines the action; but it is a purely natural phenomenon. Mr. Green, on the contrary, insists not only that the strongest motive is not a natural phenomenon (*Prolegomena*, § 95),

but that it is essential to the freedom of the Will that it should not be so (*Prolegomena*, § 87).

These differences suffice to show that Libertarians are not, as is sometimes assumed, a compact body, united in adherence to a common and well-defined belief, but a number of rival sects, each struggling to wrest from the other the standard of free-will.

To these confused cries the answer of Determinism is simple. The power which Libertarians claim for the Self either to will in opposition to the strongest motive, or to decide which of the competing motives shall be the strongest, is only possible on the assumption that the Self is an originating or uncaused cause of action<sup>1</sup>—in other words, a standing exception to the causation which prevails throughout the rest of nature. The only *fact* in favour of this assumption is our feeling of being free in our acts of volition,—a feeling which, it is admitted, may be quite illusory,—while the probabilities against it are almost overwhelming. Moreover, even if such an uncaused Self exists, it must be a metaphysical entity of which we can have no positive knowledge. On the other hand, the Self which we do know in experience (whatever

<sup>1</sup> "On the assumption that the sum of influences (motives, dispositions, and tendencies) to volition A is equal to 12 and the sum of influences to counter-volition B equal to 8—Can we conceive that the determination of volition A should not be necessary? We can only conceive the volition B to be determined by supposing that the man creates (calls from non-existence into existence) a certain supplement of influences. But this creation as actual, or in itself, is inconceivable, and even to conceive the possibility of this inconceivable act, we must suppose some cause by which the man is determined to exert it. We thus *in thought* never escape determination and necessity" (Note by Sir William Hamilton on Reid, *Mill on Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 498).

its hidden nature or constituents may be), the Self to which all conduct must be referred, is the Self which is manifested as character. Character, in short, in relation to conduct is the man ; and though for the sake of convenience we may speak of a man's character, it is not to be supposed that a man is something distinct from his character. An act of volition is the result of motives operating upon the character, and is entirely determined by these two ; while each man's character is itself a strictly determined product, which, as part of the process of nature, conforms inflexibly to its order. In simple cases the character may respond at once to the motive which solicits it ; in others the claims of conflicting motives may cause a protracted indecision ; but the result is never in doubt. Sooner or later these claims are adjusted, and there emerges from the turmoil some victorious motive or combination of motives, which evokes from the character a suitable volition. It is this period of indecision which gives us the feeling—according to Determinists an altogether fictitious feeling—of freedom. In a certain sense a man acts as he chooses, but he chooses as—being the man he is—he *must*. Every act of a man is the latest link in an immense chain of causation, in which the slightest element of uncertainty would be impossible. At a given moment there may be several courses *apparently* open to a man, but in reality there is only that course open to him which his character and his environment make the only course possible.

This, put quite shortly, is the doctrine of Deter-

minism. Let us see if it is, as Libertarians declare, *necessarily* fatal to moral responsibility and its allied conceptions. It is not quite easy to frame a definition of moral responsibility which would be acceptable to all sides, but I think that it will be common ground to all of them that moral responsibility for an act requires these three conditions at least :

- (1) That the act in question is properly imputable to the man who does it ;
- (2) That the man will actually be made to answer for it to some power or tribunal ;
- (3) That the power or tribunal which enforces this responsibility will do so in accordance with some moral standard.

Whatever other ideas may have gathered round the notion of moral responsibility, these three at least are essential to it, and to the Libertarian argument with which I am dealing. If, say the Libertarians, the act in question is not due to the man's free choice, but is part of a predetermined order over which he has no control, then it is not properly imputable to him, and consequently no moral tribunal, human or Divine, can hold him responsible for it. Free-will, therefore, is necessary to moral responsibility, and Determinism is fatal to it.

Plausible as this criticism may seem, I think that it is really unsound, because it rests partly on an incorrect view of man's relations to his fellows, and partly on an untenable theory of the nature of God's dealings with man.

So far as the relations of man to man are con-

cerned, I make bold to say that, whatever opinions as to free-will we may nominally hold, we are all, practically, Determinists. Ordinary unphilosophical persons may profess some vague belief that the will is free (usually in the Indeterminist sense), but for all practical purposes they believe that conduct springs from character, and habitually act upon that belief. There are certain universal motives by which we confidently expect human conduct in general to be guided. Our dealings with individuals are in like manner regulated by our estimate of their characters. Business would be impossible if conduct were at the mercy of an incalculable will. When we are about to engage a servant we at once ask for his character, obviously on the assumption that a knowledge of his character will enable us to forecast his conduct. And similarly in all the relations of life, men consciously or unconsciously adopt the Determinist view, that conduct is the outcome of character. Nor can the philosophers escape the same conclusion, and even so stout a Libertarian as Mr. Illingworth is driven by the logic of facts to admit that

“in average cases, the necessitarian” (*i.e.* Determinist) “contention is practically true, that a man’s conduct may be predicted from his character, or is, in other words, determined by his past” (*The Divine Immanence*, p. 209).

Now we have postulated that moral responsibility does not attach to conduct which cannot be properly imputed to the man himself. And consequently the question at once arises, Can any conduct which is determined by character be properly imputed to the

man himself? The answer depends on whether the character is synonymous with the self. Mr. Illingworth, as we have seen, strenuously repudiates the idea, declaring that

“Self as synonymous with person or self-conscious subject, *as such*, is quite distinct from self as synonymous with character, or developed personality, . . . and it is in the former sense and not the latter that the word is used in the phrase of self-determination.”

And again, that

“we may say with strict accuracy that, in proportion as our character determines us, we are not self-determined: we do not act as selves, consciously using our power of choice” (*The Divine Immanence*, pp. 193-4).

Here we have the case in a nutshell. Responsibility attaches to such conduct only as is imputable to the self; and, according to Mr. Illingworth, conduct which is determined by character is not imputable to the self. Accordingly, unless he is prepared to maintain that a man is morally responsible for conduct which is not imputable to him, it is clear, on his own showing, that, since “average” human conduct is determined by character, no moral responsibility attaches to it, and Determinists have to thank him for so effectually arguing himself out of court. On the other hand, as we have seen, Determinism asserts that, in relation to conduct, the character is the self, and thereby rescues the moral responsibility so nearly wrecked by Mr. Illingworth. It is true that Mr. Illingworth subsequently (p. 209) claims to



fix man with moral responsibility, on the ground that, however much his character determines him, it is originally formed by his own acts of choice. This argument might possibly be tenable if the character at birth were a blank sheet; but it is quite incompatible with the fact, which Mr. Illingworth expressly admits, that every man is born with a character of his own.

The human tribunals — and at present I am dealing with the human side of the question only — by which moral responsibility can be enforced are those of the law and of public or social opinion; and they all act in practice on Determinist principles. Even if they had the desire, they have not the power to get behind a man's character, and find there some ulterior cause of his conduct on which to fix responsibility. And in point of fact they do not make the attempt, but rightly hold a man responsible for the conduct which proceeds from his character, thereby adopting the view of responsibility for which Determinists contend. This becomes plainer still when we observe that the penalties by which this responsibility is enforced can only be justified on Determinist principles. Punishment aims at repressing undesirable conduct by supplying deterrent motives against it. This is intelligible and legitimate for Determinism, which holds that conduct is determined by the influence of motives on character. To an offender who claimed immunity from punishment on the ground that his misconduct was necessitated by his character, Determinists would reply: "No doubt; but

since your character, and therefore your will, is amenable to motives, we intend to supply motives which will operate against similar misconduct in the future." No such reply is open to any Libertarians, who directly or indirectly place the will beyond the control of motives. To such as these punishment must become absolutely purposeless or simply vindictive; and by no stretch of the imagination can a tribunal which inflicts punishment on such grounds be described as a moral tribunal, or the responsibility which it enforces a moral responsibility. It is clear, therefore, that Determinism, so far from impugning moral responsibility for conduct *as between man and man*, emphatically affirms it, and any danger which threatens the belief comes rather from the Libertarians than from their opponents.

When we pass, however, from responsibility to man to responsibility to God, an entirely different set of considerations arises. A human tribunal deals with the man's character as it is; it cannot inquire *why* it is as it is. As between the man and society, society cannot go behind the character, and the man is rightly held responsible for an act which can properly be imputed to him as the true outcome of his character. But as between the man and God, the question is, not who is responsible for the act, but who is responsible for the character from which the act proceeded; and, applying the same test, no moral tribunal can hold a man responsible for his character unless the character is imputable to him. Now it is obvious that every man is born with a

certain character, and whatever the history of its origin may be, he did not make it for himself, and it cannot be imputed to him. Consequently, *as between man and God*, the responsibility for conduct which springs from character lies on the author, not on the possessor of the character; and it is impossible to believe that a righteous God will hold a man morally responsible for such conduct, or enforce this responsibility by penalty.

Happily there is, from the standpoint of Theism, no necessity whatever to suppose that any such responsibility will be enforced. Assuming, as we must assume for this purpose, that man passes after death into some other state or successive states of existence, it would no doubt be contrary to all our experience of causation to suppose that the effects of his previous conduct will not be felt in the future. But there is nothing in our experience to suggest anything like a Divine retaliation for past misconduct. The probabilities point rather to the conclusion that such retribution as may await man in the hereafter will be found in the natural interaction between his character and his new environment. If personal continuity is to be preserved at all in any future stage of existence, the man must pass into this with the character acquired during the preceding stage or stages. And in every stage he will enjoy pleasures or suffer pains according as his character is in harmony with, or obnoxious to, his environment. These pleasures and pains, as we have seen, will together constitute a system of natural requital,

which will fulfil all the purposes of penal responsibility to the Deity, and will be free from its objections. We may, indeed, see the hand of God behind it, but it differs widely from the ordinary conception of future responsibility to God. The latter contemplates, chiefly at any rate, punishment for offences, while natural requital contemplates the evolution of character. In a sense, both future responsibility to God and natural requital involve penalties; but in the case of the former the penalty represents the vengeance of an offended Deity, in the case of the latter it is but one of the beneficent pains which promote the development of character by warring against its baser elements. It is possible, no doubt, to believe in a system of Divine punishment which is also educational. But that is not the form which, as a matter of fact, the belief usually takes; and of course the belief in *eternal* punishment is quite incompatible with any idea of educational progress. The theory of natural requital is more consonant with scientific experience than any theory of future punishment; but more than this, by eliminating vengeance from our idea of the Divine dealings with man, it gives us a higher, and, I venture to think, a truer conception of the Deity. The process of evolution by means of natural requital may be slow, but there can be no question of its efficacy, if adequate time be allowed it; for it is nothing more than an application of the familiar law of the adaptation of an organism to its environment.

The belief implied in the moral government of the world, which in one form or another nearly everybody holds, is that man's evolution is part of a Divine purpose, and follows the lines which that purpose contemplates. Looked at in this light, it will be seen that our ideas of right and wrong are not merely social conventions or religious prejudices, but essential parts of the very nature of things, right being that which is in harmony with the Divine purpose, and wrong that which is opposed to it. Such a conception is strictly compatible with Determinism, and it would be impossible to find a more enduring foundation for the distinction of right and wrong which Libertarians declare that Determinism annihilates. The moral ideal of the true Libertarian is for ever out of reach, for his will is excluded by its fatal freedom from the benefits of that evolutionary discipline which is ever moulding character into higher forms. For the Determinist, on the other hand, the ideal and the goal may be one, the ideal being simply the end of the purpose which is inwoven into the scheme of things, and which in man and through man is working out its realisation.

But, say the Libertarians, it is idle to hold up to man any moral ideal if he has no free power to choose either the right or the wrong. If his conduct is determined inexorably by circumstances beyond his control, praise and blame become futile, and moral judgments impossible. The answer is simple. Praise and blame are but shifted from the

agent to the act,<sup>1</sup> under the slightly different forms of approval and disapproval, while moral judgments on the man are replaced by moral estimates of his conduct. Strictly speaking, praise or blame, in the Libertarian sense, cannot appropriately attach to a man for conduct which springs from his character; but a character and its resultant conduct can appropriately be pronounced to be good or bad, and approval or disapproval bestowed on it, according as it harmonises with, or is antagonistic to, the purpose of the scheme. And indeed the Determinist view sometimes appears even in common parlance, as, for instance, in Pope's well-quoted line,

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Though his honesty be of God's fashioning rather than his own, we can recognise the worth and nobility of the Divine work manifested in him. But beyond this, even though we do not praise, we can and do admire the man in whom the excellence is displayed, and our admiration may well become the root of a desire to imitate him, which in its turn will be a new motive to urge us towards the right. On the other hand, while we can disapprove of and endeavour to repress wrong conduct in another, our blame of the wrong-doer must be tempered by pity. The fierce denunciations of sin which figure so largely in early ecclesiastical teaching are seen to be misplaced, and will disappear, like the conception of a

<sup>1</sup> Acts done unconsciously, or by mistake, or which are otherwise not properly imputable to the agent's character, are, of course, excluded.



revengeful Deity. For with the gentler charity which Determinism makes possible, we shall see in the wrong-doer, not a stubborn enemy to the right, but a struggling soul whose lesson is not yet learnt, a younger brother in development, but one whose goal is the same as our own, and not less surely to be won.

Moreover, if we look closely into the Libertarian claim that freedom of will is necessary for moral conduct, it will be seen that such freedom, even if it were possible, would not help their contention in the least. Let us take first the free-will of Self-determinism. If, as some Self-determinists hold, this is determined by the character of the agent, such so-called freedom is identical with Determinism; and the moral conduct declared to be impossible for the latter must be impossible also for the former. If, as urged by other Self-determinists, it is the Self which selects the motive to determine the Will, the question at once arises, What determines the Self in making this selection? If the Self is in any way determined in so doing, the so-called Self-determinism again becomes Determinism. If, on the other hand, the Self is not so determined, then such Self-determinism is indistinguishable from Indeterminism. Turning next to Indeterminism, which asserts that the will can act altogether undetermined by, and independently of, motives, it is clear that conduct springing from a motiveless, aimless impulse, a mere act of chance, if chance were possible, is not only utterly unthinkable, but could have no moral value whatever.

Again, the recognition of a Divine purpose in

nature which accords so easily with Determinism, is hopelessly incompatible with with any philosophy or any religion which insists on the freedom of the will. If we regard the world and its order as the scheme of a Deity who has knowledge enough to foresee the end which He wills, and power enough to realise it, we cannot but suppose that every detail of the scheme, including human acts and the volitions which bring them about, is under His control. If He decrees the end He must also decree the means, and consequently human acts, which form part of the means, must be the direct result of His will,—in other words, must be inevitably foreordained. In such a scheme there is obviously no room for human free-will, which would wreck or imperil it millions of times a day. If it is part of God's scheme that a man should do a particular act, he cannot be left with any free power of choice in the matter; and if the act is foreordained, the agent's volition to do it must also be foreordained.

The objection is an old one, but it is usually kept in the background by Libertarians as much as possible, and it has never been effectually answered. It has been urged on behalf of free-will that though God foresees, He does not foreordain man's conduct; that prescience is not the same thing as predestination, and consequently that God's prescience renders no actions necessary. To this Jonathan Edwards replies that prescience need not be the *cause* of the necessity of the events foreknown; it may equally well be the *effect*. But in either case it proves the necessity; for "there must be a certainty in things

themselves before they are certainly known or (which is the same thing) known to be certain" (*Treatise on the Will*, p. 175). It is true that *necessity*, in the scientific sense, is not the same thing as *predestination*; but under any form of Theism they can hardly fail to become blended, and thus to present two aspects of the same truth. Science in affirming necessity or *causation* between physical events, assures us merely of a uniformity of sequence or coexistence between them: it tells us nothing of any *causality*, or causal nexus, or compelling power—nothing, in short, of any *cause*, in the ordinary sense, of the uniformity. A necessary act in the scientific sense means simply an act which is certain to take place. As to *why* it must take place, science is silent. But a *predestined* act is a different thing altogether; and when we speak of an act as predestined we supply the *why*, we postulate God as a true first cause, and thereby import the idea of causal power which is absent from the causation of science. In other words, we affirm our belief that the observed uniformities of sequence or coexistence, which science calls "laws of nature," are produced or caused by decrees of God. In speaking, therefore, of an act as predestined, we mean that it is to be brought about by the power of God, and consequently that the predestination of the act necessarily involves the predestination of the agent's volition which produces the act.

Again, it has been suggested that the will of man is left free to act as it chooses, but that God ensures the fulfilment of His purposes by providing in every

case suitable motives to determine the choice. This, however, is simply Determinism in the thinnest disguise, and concedes the whole Determinist claim that the will is altogether dominated by motives. What the man enjoys in this case is not freedom, but merely a delusive feeling of it. He has in no sense that power of choice between alternatives which is essential to the exercise of free-will. He may fancy that he is acting on his own initiative, but in reality his conduct is entirely determined by a Divinely provided motive.

Free-will theologians in dealing with this question have to encounter a special difficulty in the strong Determinist tendencies of the Bible teaching. The subject is treated at length by Jonathan Edwards in his *Treatise on the Will*, and the late Dr. Martineau, recognising this difficulty, made an interesting attempt to dispose of it on philosophical grounds.

“He without whom there would be no future but his own cannot create a future of which he has not first the idea. It is not without reason, therefore, that prescience has been assumed by theologians as part of the conception of a perfect being. Does then the prescience, thus evidenced, involve Determinism in human actions? In the theological form, as deduced from the Scripture, it certainly does: in the philosophical form, as worked out by the Reason, I submit it does not. . . . In the outlook upon this realm which embraces the future, what is needed, in order that the intending causality of God and his moral government may secure their ends and shape their means? Simply, that no one of the open pos-

sibilities should remain in the dark and pass unreckoned; and that they should all in their working be compatible with the ruling purposes of God, not defeating the aim, but varying the track" (*Study of Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 278-9).

All the possible roads, in short, reach the goal, but man is permitted a free choice between them. This explanation, however, does not get rid of predestination; at best it only limits its scope. For it does not leave man free to choose *any* act or line of conduct, but only such as is compatible with the ruling purposes of God. No freedom as to the direction is permitted us; it is only extended to the line of route. But if I am predestined to travel from London to Edinburgh, the compulsion lies in my obligation to make the journey, and my freedom to choose the line of railway by which I travel is altogether subsidiary. Moreover, apart from other objections, the theory cannot, I think, be reconciled with the prescience which Dr. Martineau ascribes to the Deity. For it presupposes a theory of moral evolution, and where any moral issue is involved the alternative lines of conduct are not two paths of progress, but one of progress and one of retrogression. Suppose, for instance, that a man has to choose between committing or abstaining from a crime; if he elects to commit the crime, he has not advanced his moral evolution but thrown it back, and in one way or another he will have to regain the ground which he has lost. In other words, he will take longer to reach his moral goal. Apply this consideration to the whole of mankind,

and it becomes clear that the hour of fulfilment of their moral evolution will depend on the character of their volitions. These volitions being unknown, the hour of fulfilment, the end of the scheme, must also be unknown to the Deity. But, on the other hand, it must already be known to Him, because, *ex hypothesi*, He has full prescience of the end, which must occur at a point in time. I do not overlook the possibility that time may not exist for the Deity, but this does not affect my criticism of Dr. Martineau, since he assumes the scheme to exist in time, by expressly placing its realisation in the future. Professor James in his "Dilemma of Determinism" (*The Will to Believe, etc.*, pp. 180-4) offers a somewhat similar explanation. He compares the dealings of the Deity with the human agents of His world-scheme to those of an expert chess player, who, when playing with a novice, knows from the first that he will win, but does not know from the first by what moves this end shall be achieved.

"Let now the novice stand for us finite free agents, and the expert for the infinite mind in which the universe lies. Suppose the latter to be thinking out his universe before he actually creates it. Suppose him to say, I will lead things to a certain end, but I will not now decide on all the steps thereto. At various points, ambiguous possibilities shall be left open, *either* of which, at a given instant, may become actual. But whichever branch of these bifurcations becomes real, I know what I shall do at the *next* bifurcation to keep things from drifting away from the final result I intend."



Upon this I may observe, (1) if the scheme exists in time, my objection to Dr. Martineau's scheme applies to it; (2) if, on the other hand, it is the work of a timeless mind, then, as Professor James frankly admits, his theory fails altogether; and (3) in any case, as he also admits, it involves miraculous interposition on a large scale, an objection which seems to me to be absolutely fatal.

As a rule, however, the attempt to reconcile free-will with the Divine government of the world is abandoned as hopeless; and those who affirm the coexistence of the two are obliged to admit that it is a mystery, or, in plain language, that the Determinist argument is unanswerable. As a matter of fact, however, the belief in predestination, as the Rev. C. A. Row says,

“underlies the confessions of faith of nearly all the churches which spring out of the Reformation” (*Future Retribution*, p. 6),

and constantly crops up in such common places of religious teaching as the saying that “everything is ordered for the best.” It is only the logical outcome of the belief in the Divine government of the world; and the reluctance to accept it is largely a survival from the time when the conditions of religious thought differed considerably from those of to-day. It is usually associated with Calvinism, and comes down to us from the days when the fearful doctrine of eternal punishment brooded, an abiding terror, over men's minds. But a predestination which only means the ordained fulfilment of a purpose which has

the highest welfare of mankind for its end, a march upwards in which no soul whatever shall be left irretrievably behind, is darkened by no such terror, nay rather, is bright with hope. Life may be a painful struggle, but it is a transient stage of progress, not an isolated ordeal, with the awful issues of eternal welfare or eternal perdition at stake. And the ills which we encounter are but teachers, working under the kindly eye of the Deity who decreed the scheme, and who knows the meaning and the value of our failures.

It seems, then, that the doctrine of free-will breaks down at every point where it comes into contact with the realities of existence. But though it must, I think, eventually succumb to the attacks of modern criticism, it has been of real value in the past. While the Divine scheme was regarded, practically, as a scheme for placing within reach of the few a salvation which could only be attained by strenuous personal effort, a belief in the freedom of the will was a moral necessity. It was inconsistent, no doubt, with much of the contemporary religious teaching, but nevertheless it preserved moral energy from being paralysed, and men from sinking into apathetic fatalism or hopeless despair. But as the belief grew up that the benevolent purpose of the Deity extended to all mankind, the necessity of free-will became weakened, and the most formidable objection to Determinism disappeared. And indeed the certainty which is essential to any scheme of universalism seems to require Determinism as a basis; for Determinism stands for order, while Libertarianism, in the

last resort, can only be interpreted as lawlessness. But as the conditions which gave value to the belief in free-will pass away, the real issues can be more clearly recognised. There cannot be two supreme rulers of man's career. If it is really in God's hands, it cannot also be left entirely to man's discretion. The antiquated device of a "mystery" may serve for a time to stifle reason, but it cannot permanently reconcile two contradictories. Sooner or later a choice must be made; and those who insist on the freedom of man's will must abandon any intelligible belief in the Divine government of the world.

It is true, however, that a belief in the Divine foreordination of things does bring into stronger prominence the supreme difficulty of all religion and religious philosophies—the existence of evil. How can evil find place in the scheme of a Deity who is at once benevolent and omnipotent? If God could have dispensed with evil but would not, then He is not benevolent; if He would have dispensed with evil but could not, then He is not omnipotent; and the solution of this problem also is declared to be a mystery. This question is dealt with in a subsequent chapter; and for the present it is sufficient to remark that we need not postulate unlimited power for the Deity; we need only postulate His possession of power adequate for the realisation of His scheme. Indeed, the very idea of a scheme plainly implies a limitation of power; for a scheme implies contrivance, and contrivance can only be necessary where power is limited.

And now we are better able to perceive the real

possibilities of Determinism. From the standpoint of science it is the recognition of an inviolate order of things, which, from the standpoint of religion, may well be regarded as a scheme of predestined evolution up to that

“one far-off Divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.”

Determinism in this sense, which I will call religious Determinism, is no blind idolatry of law, no narrow denial of anything in nature beyond the ken of experience. On the contrary, it is the affirmation of a Divine power with a definite purpose behind all that constitutes experience, and which ensures the moral evolution of mankind with a certainty which Libertarianism may seek for in vain. Assuming the Deity to be benevolent but not omnipotent, it is possible to suppose that His power was insufficient to bestow on mankind, in the first instance, the full perfection which His benevolence contemplated, and hence, that the scheme of evolution which we discern in nature was the method chosen for working out this end. Though man could not be gifted with wisdom and goodness as a birthright, he could be set to win them for himself under the schooling of experience; and, for aught we can tell, he may prize them as an achievement more than he would have prized them as a boon. But if experience is to be his teacher, it is clear that the needful lesson cannot be learnt without suffering; and herein we find an explanation of evil which the intellect need not reject as impossible, or the moral sense resent as unjust. Man's history cannot be severed from that

of the nature of which he forms part, and he must have reached his present position from an origin which is lost in the darkness of an æonian past; whether from the outset, as I have urged, spirit and form were interwoven in the something which was to become man, developing together till his humanity was attained, or whether spirit supervened at some later stage of physical evolution,<sup>1</sup> man's present equipment is, in either case, a heritage from the past.

And the story of this past is the story of a struggle upwards through long pre-human stages, till in due time there emerged, patiently and toilsomely wrought in nature's workshop, a bodily vehicle fit for the spirit of man. Up to this point evolution ministered chiefly to his physical efficiency; its course was then shifted from the body to the mind. The passions and desires brought over from his animal past, though in themselves non-moral, became the instruments of moral evolution. For only out of action can morality be evolved, and only by desire can primitive man be spurred into action. Hurried this way and that by its cravings, he is repeatedly dashed against the requitals which nature opposes to conduct out of harmony with the scheme. This system of requital never fails, and though it is inexorable it is never hostile. It shapes the course of moral development with unerring hand, but its purpose is always discipline, never revenge. Pleasures and pains, in short, are our teachers in the scheme; and as Right is that

<sup>1</sup> I understand this to be the view of Mr. Green (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 184) as well as of Mr. A. R. Wallace (*Darwinism*, pp. 474, 478).

which is nature-rewarded, so Wrong is that which nature will punish. The pains with which nature requites every violation of that righteousness which is part of her order, slowly build up in man a body of wholesome aversions from the wrong. Though these are ultimately based on considerations of utility, as they gradually gather strength their foundation becomes obscured. The prudential maxim which originated in utility may finally survive as a moral intuition; and what man at first learnt to shun as inexpedient, he will at last shrink from as repugnant to his very nature.

Thus restrained from the wrong, man soon begins to reap the happiness which rewards the right. From the pains which requite the one, he learns prudence, justice, and self-control; from the joys which crown the other, he acquires the loftier qualities of benevolence, mercy, and self-sacrifice. Under these combined influences he will pass from strength to strength, till he enters at last upon the tranquil path where duty and desire are one.

Then, indeed, does

"the full-grown will,  
Circled through all experiences, pure law,  
Commeasure perfect freedom."

But though freedom be commasured, the will is not made free. The painfully acquired motives which have brought man's feet into the way of peace will still be there, though in the background, to support him, and, before this, will have been reinforced by a motive of supreme power. In the



lower stages of his evolution he learns his lesson blindly, not seeing its import. But as he fares upwards, the Divine design begins to be unfolded before him, and his character, now attuned to its purpose, will respond with an eager desire to further it. He will perceive that the moral law is not an arbitrary or artificial code, but an essential factor in the evolution of nature. Though he has been taught by stripes to obey it, he will recognise that it really claims from him not fear, but reverence, as the master principle of that great scheme, for the due fulfilment of which he himself is one of God's agents. Though moving, indeed, along a destined course, man is not moved puppet-wise, as the Libertarians vainly talk, but as an intelligent and sympathetic minister, whose whole nature aspires to the goal whereto the Divine power is leading him.

Religious Determinism, therefore, is a belief from which no one need shrink, and it sacrifices nothing worth preserving of all that Libertarians are anxious to preserve. A Determinist who interprets nature by this creed places right on a foundation of natural order which can never be shaken. Duty for him will lie in the obligation to further the purpose of the world scheme, enforced from the first by the inevitable sanctions of natural requital, and quickened in the later stages of development by the sense of a sympathetic personal relation with its author. Moral responsibility will be preserved in the only sense in which it is either necessary or legitimate; and in the Divine ordainment of human

destinies he will see a government of the world which is truly moral in virtue of the righteousness which inspires it, and truly a government because nothing is beyond its control. Indeed, the moral government of the world, for which Libertarians are so concerned, is difficult to reconcile with the free-will, whose essence it is to be immune from compulsion. And they may fairly be asked, If the will be governed, what becomes of its freedom? if the will be free, what becomes of the government? The belief in free-will is at present propped up rather by groundless fears of the dangers of discarding it than by any solid evidence in its favour. From all such fears the religious Determinist is free. He can discern that morality is rooted, not in the avowed or covert lawlessness of free-will, but in man's inviolate relation to the scheme of existence and to the Divine guidance which controls it throughout. Secure under this guidance, he can face the present with faith and the future with hope. The doctrine of free-will which he believes to be false, he would not wish to be true, being content that his will should "be one with the law that beckons the worlds along."

## CHAPTER X

### THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRAYER

THE belief in a divinely ordered scheme of existence is, as we have seen, incompatible with a belief in the freedom of the human will; and the same Determinism which excludes free-will from the scheme must also affect our attitude towards prayer. It is obvious that if causation prevails universally, no belief in any miraculous interference with the order of nature is possible; and if answer to prayer involves miraculous interference, belief in the efficacy of prayer must be discarded. This is almost admitted by many theologians, who sometimes attempt to get over the difficulty by representing a miracle to be, not a violation of natural law, but a manifestation of some "higher law" with which science is not acquainted. This theory, however, rests on a misconception of the meaning of "law of nature." A "higher law" as meaning a law of greater power or authority is an intelligible expression when applied to law in the sense of *ordinance*. But it is meaningless when applied to a *law of nature*, which is not an ordinance but an observed uniformity of sequence or coexistence between phenomena. Again, if we regard existence as part of a Divinely ordained

scheme, prayer is open to a serious objection on religious grounds. For if it be assumed (as it *is* nominally assumed by the orthodox) that everything is ordered for the best by Divine benevolence, it is surely more than presumptuous to pray that this order should be altered.

It is said, however, that the tendency to prayer is inveterate; that men in all ages have been accustomed to address prayers to their deity or deities; and that this universal tendency can only spring from some *a priori* apprehension of religious truth. But in estimating this argument it is well to consider what was the character of primitive prayer, and to what sort of deities it was addressed. Primitive prayer is almost invariably of one type, which in its best form is abject deprecation, and in its worst, devil-worship. The earliest deities were nearly all malevolent, and required constant propitiation: such as were not were not considered worth praying to. M. Réville, in his *History of the Devil*, quotes a prayer of the Madagascans to Nyang, the author of evil according to their creed:

“O Zamhor, to thee we offer no prayers. The good god needs no asking. But we must pray to Nyang. Nyang must be appeased. O Nyang, bad and strong spirit, let not the thunder roar over our heads! . . . Thou reignest—and this thou knowest—over the wicked, and great is their number, O Nyang. Torment not, then, any longer the good folk.”

The Jahveh of Judaism was no exception to this rule, and, as depicted in the earlier parts of the Old Testament, was precisely such a Deity as one would

expect to find in the religion of a race of fierce warriors. Mr. Conway, in commenting on the absence of any devil from the mythology of the Jews, observes that this conception was superfluous, as the jealous and vindictive Jahveh was quite equal to any diabolical function (*Demonology*, vol. i. p. 10).

It was not till the century preceding the birth of Jesus, that the higher conception of God as a Heavenly Father took any real hold of Jewish thought. This view was embodied in the teachings of Jesus, and readily passed into the doctrines of Christianity. But as it grew it thrust the old savage conception of Jahveh more and more into the shade. Among the Gnostics, Cerinthus, about 115 A.D., held that the God of Christianity was not identical with the Deity of the Jews; and a little later Marcion proclaimed Jahveh to be a spirit of evil. But though the characteristics of Jahveh may have practically disappeared from our conception of God, they have left their mark on our prayers; and the deprecations of Divine anger which abound in our church service are relics of an ancestral belief in Divine malevolence.

Nevertheless, in spite of the objections of science and the arguments of philosophy, thousands of men and women do continue to pray; and many of those whose convictions have driven them to abandon the practice have broken regretfully with the old faith. This is a fact which cannot, and indeed ought not to be overlooked, and may well make us pause, and consider whether prayer may not yet fill a place in religion from which science has no need, and, perhaps, no power to expel it.

And first, it is necessary to determine what prayer in its ordinary acceptance is understood to comprise. To avoid the invidiousness of selecting from individual writers, I seek a definition from impersonal sources. In the *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* it is defined as "the act and habit of petitioning God for spiritual or physical benefits which we cannot obtain without Divine co-operation." The *Dictionary of Religion* gives it rather a larger scope, affirming that "in its wider meaning prayer includes not only petition to God for ourselves and for others, but also confession of sin, thanksgiving for mercies received, and also praise and adoration of God for His greatness and glory, to which last the term of worship is properly applied."

If from these definitions can be gathered a sufficiently accurate account of the theological conception of prayer, how far can prayer, as thus defined, be brought into conformity with the belief in a divinely ordained scheme? Tried by this test, I think it is clear that anything in the nature of petition for physical benefits must be eliminated from it. Science, of course, could not pretend to sanction petitions for miraculous interference with the order of nature. But there is also a formidable objection from the religious side of the question, to which I have previously alluded, namely, that if God has already foreordained the course of events, no prayer can alter His will. Both the authorities from which I have quoted face this objection fairly, and admit, with the most commendable candour, that it is practically unanswerable. The *Dictionary of Religion* says, "How there can be a place for petition



when God foresees everything is the mystery of prayer; but there is likewise the mystery of free-will, and the one is the necessary complement of the other." In the same strain the *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* recognises that the difficulty is "one of those mysteries which encompass the great question of free-will . . . and there is little or no hope of ever coming to a perfect understanding of such mysteries without a further revelation from God, or a further exaltation of man's mental powers." Again, "How shall we reconcile these two opposite, or apparently opposite, facts that a beneficent God knows our wants before we can name them, and is loving enough to satisfy them without being asked to do so, and yet requires us to put those wants before Him in prayer and ask Him to satisfy them? We cannot reconcile them. They are facts that depend for their explanation on mysteries of God's nature which He permits to remain mysteries."

I have quoted these frank admissions at length in order to make it clear that theologians cannot dispose of the above objection to prayer, but are content to let it remain a mystery. One argument, however, which is raised by *The Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* requires some attention. It is said that though God has fore-ordained the course of events, yet answers to prayers are themselves among the circumstances which God's will has foreordained. This plea is a confession of Determinism, pure and simple, and is quite incompatible with the freedom of will previously assumed. But from the point of view of religious Determinism

it suggests some interesting reflections. For those who believe in a Divine order of things, human prayers, as part of that order, must undoubtedly be foreordained. And the question then arises, Is it possible that, under certain circumstances, prayers may be answered without any disturbance of the Divine order? Is it possible, in fact, that prayers may, in some cases, be, not vain attempts to alter the Divine purpose, but part of the machinery by which that purpose is carried into effect?

I think it will be admitted, in reference to prayer, that a distinction is generally drawn between prayer which aims at physical, and prayer which aims at mental or spiritual results; and that the expectation of obtaining an answer to the former is very much less strong than the expectation of obtaining an answer to the latter. A person who would pray for the comfort of a friend in sorrow, in full confidence that his prayer will be effectual, would hardly expect the same success for a prayer that his friend might find a £5 note on his table. Has this distinction any valid foundation? Now, omitting the religious element of the question altogether, it is plain, as a matter of experience, that mind does not act directly on inorganic matter. There is, however, good reason to suppose that it can and does act on mind. The existence of telepathy, for instance, can hardly be doubted, whatever its explanation may be. It seems possible, therefore, that prayer which aims at a mental or spiritual result may be made efficacious, not by a violation of natural order, but through telepathic agencies which are part of that order. The benevo-

lent feeling which finds expression in the prayer may act telepathically on the sufferer, and thereby impart to him the comfort for which the prayer appeals. But there is yet a further possibility. Clifford, as we have seen in connection with his theory of mind-stuff, held that a feeling could exist by itself, without forming part of a consciousness. If this be so, we must regard the mind-stuff which permeates nature as being, in its elementary condition, something with a simple capacity for feeling. In such a substance the human mind might well find a congenial material for its operations; and it is conceivable that the mind may have power to fashion out of this indifferentiated mind-stuff mental structures with a specific conscious intent. In this case the emotion which animates a prayer might call into being a mental structure charged with the execution of the prayer's desire, and capable of operating on the mind of the person prayed for. With regard to prayer for one's own mental or spiritual benefit, the same considerations, *mutatis mutandis*, would apply; and indeed the subjective value of prayer is recognised on all sides. Nor is it necessary to restrict the operation of prayer to those who belong to the present stage of existence. There is no apparent reason why it should not also reach those who have passed onwards into another, or, indeed, why their prayers should not reach us.

Prayer, therefore, of this kind, and its fulfilment, may well be regarded as part of that Divine order in which every process is necessarily foreordained.

But to return to the consideration of prayer in general. I think that anything in the nature of

deprecation should also be eliminated from prayer, because it seems to rest on a false conception of the nature and attributes of God and of man's relations to the order of nature. It is, as I have said, a relic of devil-worship, and is clearly allied to self-immolation, self-mutilation, and generally to every form of that degradation of the creature so strangely supposed to be acceptable to the Creator, of which the excesses of St. Simon Stylites may be taken as a type.

With regard to the confession of sin, this, within limits, seems harmless or even desirable. The open recognition of our shortcomings can hardly fail to have a salutary influence on our development; but the petitions for forgiveness, with which it is usually linked, must be altogether excluded. If the order of the scheme be constant, no such interference with it as the forgiveness of sins would entail can be possible. To sins against this order there are attached inexorable, though natural requitals, and no prayer can procure Divine intervention to save the wrong-doer from the consequences of his own act.

But when criticism has done its worst, surely much that is valuable still remains. It is surely possible to strip prayer of its outworn components, and yet leave much that is well worth retaining. If it be asked what residue will be left of prayer after these components have been struck out, I turn to Cardinal Manning for an answer. In one of his sermons (*Sermons*, vol. ii. p. xvii) prayer is described as a means of realising man's personal relation to God.

There is little in this description which could

not be accepted by any scientific man who does not altogether deny the existence of a Deity. But indeed no science can lawfully forbid man to believe that he, with his past and his future, belongs to a system of existence which is inspired to struggle upwards by "a power that makes for righteousness." His relations to such a power would be outraged by petitions for the disturbance of this order, and degraded by the deprecation and self-abasement which can only fitly belong to the worship of the malign. In these relations alone must we seek for the true explanation of man's place in the scheme of nature, and for trustworthy guidance of his right conduct therein. To him, as the latest and highest product of this scheme, its due progress seems to be specially committed; and consequently, conduct which impedes his own struggle upwards is not only an offence against his own highest interests, but is a sin against the order of the universe. This belief as to the nature of the scheme of existence is no bar to the impulse which so naturally arises in us to commune with the Divine power which is behind and within this scheme. Such communing is surely a means of "realising man's personal relation to God," and may fitly be described as prayer. Prayer, however, of this kind has nothing in common with the narrow and often selfish petitions for special benefits, or the wailings of the "miserable sinner" which at present pass under its name. Speaking in the general terms which alone are possible in reference to this subject, prayer will then become the expression of man's recognition of the Divine power and intelligence

manifested in the universe, frank submission to its order, ready acceptance of the burdens of his high part therein, and earnest resolve to play that part well.

Religion, as Martineau truly observed, is a mode of feeling as well as a mode of thought; and though, in the long run, the current of religious feeling must submit to the control and guidance of religious thought, it often happens that the latter is in advance of the former. We are at present passing through one of these phases. Thought is fast discarding the religion of the past, with its lower conceptions of the Deity, and all the doctrines and ritual of propitiation; but feeling still lingers by the ancient shrine. Small wonder, then, that prayer, of which feeling is the fountainhead, should still pour forth through the old and well-worn channels. Perhaps it is well that this should be so for a while, seeing that of all the components of our mental heritage, religion needs and indeed deserves the most tender handling, and is the least capable of enduring any convulsive reform. Feeling, however, will in due course follow in the footsteps of thought, and the prayer of the future will be attuned to those higher conceptions which religious thought has already reached. Not less reverent, though more robust than the prayer of to-day, it will embody the religious aspirations of man, trained to a truer apprehension of nature and nature's God; and though it may draw man away from the altar, it will lead him nearer to the throne.



## CHAPTER XI

### EVIL

THE problem of evil has its philosophical as well as its religious side, and the two cannot really be separated; but it is chiefly in its religious aspect that it has caused so much perplexity to men's minds. Epicurus, as quoted by Lactantius, concisely sums up the difficulty:

“God is either willing to abolish evil and cannot, or He can and will not, or He neither will nor can, or He both will and can. If He be willing yet unable to do so He is—what cannot befall to God—weak; if He be able but unwilling, He is malign, which is equally foreign to the Divine character; if He neither will nor can, He is both malign and weak, and consequently not Divine; if He be both willing and able, which alone accords with His Godhead, how come evils to exist, or why does He not abolish them?<sup>1</sup>”

Lactantius replies that evil is necessary for the acquisition of wisdom: “*Nam si malum nullum sit, nullum periculum, nihil denique quod lædere hominem possit tolletur omnis materia sapientiæ.*” But how this necessity can be imposed on omnipotence does not appear.

<sup>1</sup> *De Ira Dei*, ch. 13.

The simplest explanation of the problem is that offered by Dualism, which in its boldest form, Manichæism, represents the universe as the arena of a perpetual struggle between two rival principles of good and evil.

This doctrine has by no means lost all hold on belief, but the difficulties which beset the conception of two opposing first principles are considerable, and, on the whole, the tendency has been to seek some explanation of evil more compatible with a Monistic interpretation of the universe. Origen and others tried to soften the antagonism of good and evil by insisting on the negative character of the latter, and holding out the hope of a final *apokatastasis*, or restoration of all things to their natural unity with God. Moral evils, according to him, were not created by God, but were, so to speak, the waste products of creation, like the shavings and sawdust produced by a carpenter's work (*Contra Celsum*, vi. c. 55); external evils were merely means of discipline and purification (*ib.* c. 56).

The question tortured St. Augustine, who at first turned to Manichæism, but afterwards became its most resolute opponent. Denying that evil was an absolute principle or substance, he adopted and developed the doctrine of its negative character, declaring it to be merely a privation of the good, but without admitting a final *apokastatasis*. Evil cannot indeed be a substance, for if it were it would be good, the good being the only true substance (*Confessions*, vii. 12). Evil has no natural existence; it is merely a name given to the loss of good (*De Civ. Dei*, xi. 9). The most corrupted nature

possesses some element of good, or it could not exist. Even the devil and his angels owe their existence to a certain participation in that goodness which is the source of all life (*De Trin.* xiii. 16). Evil is to be regarded as a sort of corruption, and it is plain that corruption itself is not a substance, and cannot exist independently of the substance which it corrupts (*De Mor. Man.* 7). Such arguments are not very convincing, for even if evil be metaphysically unsubstantial, its presence in the world of our consciousness has still to be reconciled with the benevolence and omnipotence of God. Here, as might be expected, the argument breaks down. It is maintained that, though God is indeed the author of all being, yet He is not the author of evil, which is non-being (*De Mor. Man.* 3). Evil and sin spring from the wrong exercise by man of his free-will, but they are permitted by God, partly because they can be turned by Him to good purposes (*De Civ. Dei*, xi. 18; *De Continentia*, 15); and partly because, though in themselves blemishes, they are necessary to the beauty of the whole scheme of creation, as a judicious mixture of dark colour is necessary to the beauty of a picture (*De Civ. Dei*, xi. 23), or the antithesis of contrary ideas to that of a poem (*De Civ. Dei*, xi. 18).

The latter notion—which was adopted also by Bruno—accorded closely with St. Augustine's stern view of the relations of mankind to God. Most people now would recoil from the conception of a deity who could torture his creatures for his own glorification, or out of a regard to the æsthetic fitness of things. But for St. Augustine all men deserved

eternal damnation for the sin of Adam, and the mass of them who would actually incur it (*Hinc est universa generis humani massa damnata*) would be only a fitting monument of God's righteous retribution, though some few would be delivered from this fate to serve as manifestations of His mercy (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 12). It is true that punishment after death was, according to him, in some cases temporary only (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 13); but where it was everlasting it plainly involved an eternity of that evil which he declared to have no positive existence. He is, in fact, driven to admit into the final disposition of things that very dualism of good and evil which at the outset he denies, thereby furnishing a signal instance of the difficulty of explaining evil on rigorously Monistic lines.

In the same struggle to acquit the Deity of the responsibility for evil, Erigena was carried to the curious length of placing it entirely outside his cognition. In the Divine mind, he thought, was contained all existence, and nothing but existence. Consequently, evil, which has no real existence, being merely a privation or defect, has no place there, and forms no part of the Divine design.

“Divinus itaque animus nullum malum, nullamque malitiam novit; nam si nosset, substantialiter extitissent, neque causa carerent. Jam vero et causa carent; ac per hoc in numero conditarum naturarum essentialiter non sunt, ideoque omnino divina alienantur notitia.”<sup>1</sup>

Coming to later times, Archbishop King's monumental treatise on the origin of evil is, in spite of its

<sup>1</sup> *De Divisione Naturæ*, v. 27.

learning and ingenuity, crowded with contradictions which shout defiance at each other. It is only possible here to deal with his argument in the briefest manner. He declares God to be infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, and free. "And hence it manifestly follows that the world is as well as it could be made by infinite *power* and *goodness*." This was held also by Leibnitz. "God might, indeed, have refrained from creating, and continued alone, self-sufficient, and perfect to all Eternity, but His infinite goodness would by no means allow it." Hence any created thing must needs be imperfect, since absolute perfection belongs only to God: an argument also used by Voltaire. As it is quaintly put by the Archbishop, "A creature is descended from God, a most perfect Father, but from nothing, as its Mother, which is imperfection itself." Accordingly, "we may affirm that God, though infinitely good and powerful, could not separate things from the concomitant evils of imperfection." Here the omnipotence ascribed to God in the first part of the sentence is denied in the second; and the essay abounds with similar inconsistencies. He argues at great length that only such evils are permitted by God as could not be removed without giving rise to greater evils, and the treatise closes with the following passage:

"Epicurus then is both a Deceiver and deceived himself, when from the present Evils he concludes against the Omnipotence and Goodness of the Deity. Whereas, on the contrary God would neither have been powerful nor good if he had not tolerated Evils. From a competition or (if we

may be allowed the expression) a conflict of two Infinites, *i.e.* Omnipotence and Goodness, Evils necessarily arise. These attributes amicably conspire together, and yet restrain and limit each other. There is a kind of struggle and opposition between them, whereof the Evils in nature bear the shadow and resemblance. Here then, and nowhere else, may we find the primary and most certain rise and origin of Evils."

It is hardly necessary to point out that this rather pathetic conclusion to the author's labours involves the assumption of two limited infinites and an omnipotence which is subject to restraint.

Theological apologists naturally devoted their attention chiefly to moral evil; but the evils which are wholly unconnected with human conduct equally require an explanation. Philosophers have attempted to deal with the question in various ways, but with no more success than the theologians. Whether it be said that evil has a relative existence only, or that it is a consequence of the necessarily finite nature of creation, or that it is morally necessary as a condition of free-will, the mind, and still more the heart, remains unsatisfied by the explanation. Though evil may be relative only to our consciousness, it is none the less real to us on that account; and any explanation which makes it a necessary element in the scheme of creation thereby limits the assumed omnipotence of the Creator. As to this, Lotze says frankly :

"It would be quite useless to analyse the attempts that have been made to solve this problem. No one has here found the thought



which would save us from our difficulty, and I too know it not. . . . Let us therefore . . . say that where there appears to be an irreconcilable contradiction between the omnipotence and the goodness of God, there our finite wisdom has come to the end of its tether, and that we do not understand the solution which yet we believe in.”<sup>1</sup>

Among modern poets, Tennyson finds no answer to the question beyond the faint hope that good may prove the final goal of ill. Browning wrestles with it continually :

“Wherefore should any evil hap to man—  
From ache of flesh to agony of soul,  
Since God’s All-mercy mates All-potency?  
Nay, why permits He evil to Himself—  
Man’s sin, accounted such?”<sup>2</sup>

He brings to the struggle a passionate faith in God’s omnipotence and man’s “impuissance” (“Cherries”); but in the end he can only exclaim :

“Put pain from out the world, what room were left  
For thanks to God, for love to man?”<sup>3</sup>

And to the same effect is the Pope’s apostrophe in *The Ring and the Book* (Book x. 1375).

Clearly none of these are answers at all. At the best they are only suggested explanations of the presence and purpose of evil in the existing scheme of things; they in no wise explain the deeper question as to how such a scheme could originate from a Deity who is at once benevolent and all-powerful. No such explanation is, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, 2, Book ix.

<sup>2</sup> “Mihrab Shah.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

possible, and men are usually driven with Lotze to abandon the problem in despair, as one of the painful mysteries of existence. Mystery no doubt it is; but it may be well to consider whether it is not to some extent a mystery of our own creation.

Speaking broadly, the belief in a Deity seems to be a necessity of human nature. As Voltaire put it: If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him. There are exceptions, no doubt, yet, in one shape or another, the belief obtains a practically universal assent, and, after passing through lower forms, finally evolves into the philosophical conception of an absolute Deity. But besides this, man finds himself under an obligation, almost if not quite as imperious, to *worship* the Deity of his belief, and hence arises the conception of a Deity of religion. Now, in dealing with the Divine qualities, we do not always fully realise that the Deity is presented to us under these two aspects—the Deity of philosophy and the Deity of religion. The ultimate reality is in either case the same, but each presentation must be kept distinct; and it is our neglect of this distinction which makes the problem of evil such a tangle of perplexity to us. For in our speculations about evil we usually confuse the two presentations, and attempt first to treat the Deity of religion as identical for all purposes with the absolute unity of Monism, and then to invest him with moral attributes which are necessarily relative, and therefore inapplicable to an absolute Deity. Thus the omnipotence ascribed to the Deity of religion is, in any case, only predicable of an absolute and infinite Deity—the Deity of philosophy.

On the other hand, the benevolence ascribed to him, being a particular quality, cannot be predicated of an absolute Deity; nor, since it implies a relation between himself and creatures external to him, can it be predicated of an infinite Deity, for whom nothing external can exist. It can only be predicated of one who, like the Deity of religion, is conceived of as being distinct from his creatures—in fact, a Deity who is in some sort finite. The Deity of philosophy may be regarded as omnipotent, the Deity of religion as benevolent; but unless—which I submit is not the case—the two presentations are identical, the Deity cannot properly be described in general terms as being at once omnipotent and benevolent; and if this be so, the most perplexing element of the problem forthwith disappears.

The attribution of omnipotence to the Deity of religion probably originated in a well-meaning but misdirected reverence which deemed it a dishonour to impose limitations upon him, and accordingly made him “not only a supernatural and moral spirit, but also an almighty and all-embracing cause.” This tendency, as Mr. Ernest Myers points out, found a congenial soil in the social and philosophical surroundings of early Christianity:

“The growth of Monotheism out of Polytheism, suggesting that as each of the many gods represented some power of nature, so the one God who absorbed them must include all powers (*serpens nisi serpentem comederit non fit draco*), the naturally easy assignment of creative and regulating powers to an object of worship, would

account for this, even had not Greek metaphysics and Roman law been pressed into the service of Christian theology; the former finding in God the supreme abstraction the one; the latter investing him with the legal attributes of his kingship over men, and expounding the relations between the two parties in a whole system of formulæ; thus not unnaturally leading to the attribution of absolute power over the Universe.<sup>1</sup>

Now absolute unity is a natural and appropriate presentation of the Deity of philosophic thought, but it is hopelessly unserviceable as a presentation of the Deity of religious worship. It is not possible to worship, in any ordinary sense of the word, the infinite or the absolute *as such*. The religious sense of mankind will not be satisfied with an abstraction; it demands a *personal* Deity, who can enter into relations with the worshipper. Whether this sense be a flash of Divine truth, or an *ignis fatuus* born of human ignorance, is for the moment immaterial; for in either case the yearning for a personal Deity is a religious need of human nature which every real religion must satisfy if it hopes to endure. But with the conception of a personal Deity all the inseparable limitations of personality are introduced, and these are quite irreconcilable with the boundless range which the infinite, the absolute, and the omnipotent demand. Again, all our most cherished ideas with regard to the Deity of our worship depend entirely on his personality, and consequently on his finiteness. Goodness, holiness, love, mercy, justice, and so forth, are qualities or

<sup>1</sup> "A Plea for Dualism," *Theol. Review*, vol. xi. p. 182.

conditions which are relative and particular, and therefore altogether inapplicable to the absolute, the infinite, or the unconditioned. No quality can be specifically ascribed to that in which all qualities are merged, without *pro tanto* conditioning its absoluteness and limiting its infinity. An absolute Deity can be neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral, for all alike are conditions which cannot be imposed on the unconditioned.

Thus we are confronted with the question, How, if at all, can these conflicting presentations of the Deity be reconciled? Can the infinite Deity of philosophy coexist with the finite Deity of religion? The answer seems to be furnished by the spectacle of creation. The finite things of which creation is composed cannot lie outside the infinite, nor can they be limitations imposed upon the infinite by any power external to it. How then do they come by their finiteness? The only conclusion seems to be that finite things, or creation as we know it, are caused by a *self-limitation* of the infinite. And this creation, which exists under conditions of space and time, which is finite in its order, and finite in its possibilities, seems to demand for its due administration the government of a Deity adapted to its limitations. May it not therefore be that, to meet this need, the infinite Deity has, by an act of self-limitation, akin to that from which finite creation sprang, induced an aspect of finiteness, so as to ensure the due fulfilment of His purpose, and a system of close, harmonious, and intelligible relations between Himself and His work? This surely is the truth enshrined in the obscure saying

of Heraclitus : *Ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μουνὸν λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζητὸς οὔνομα.*

No name or personality can rightly be given to that absolute unity wherein alone wisdom resides, but to the end that it may become in some wise intelligible to us, it "is willing, though it wills not to be called by the name of Zeus."

And here I should point out that such an account as that above suggested can, from the nature of the case, be only approximately correct. We cannot really think of an infinite Deity as "He," or, in any human sense, as "Self," nor in strictness, perhaps, can we ascribe any purpose to the absolute. But this infirmity of our thought is accompanied by a corresponding infirmity of language, and we can only attempt to interpret the absolute and its manifestations in the terms which we are accustomed to apply to the relative.

It may be said, however, that our conception of a personal Deity does not in fact relate to any objective reality, does not imply that there is any actual personal presentation of the Deity corresponding with it, but is merely a human device to provide an intelligible object for man's religious aspirations. Be it so; it is certainly an objection which cannot be disproved. But let us observe that, if it tells against the belief in a personal Deity, it tells also against the belief in a Deity at all. Neither belief is demonstrably true; yet each alike is attested by an almost irresistible tendency of thought; and if this is not to be trusted in the one case, there is no sufficient reason for trusting it in the other. But in truth we are under no



obligation to discredit the validity of our belief in a personal Deity. Our knowledge is of course conditioned by our limited faculties, but a conception is not necessarily false because it is relative. As a well-known writer has pointed out :

“Human knowledge, no doubt, is relative in a very genuine sense: it is *I* that know, else that knowledge were not mine. No doubt, also, man is to himself ‘the measure of all things,’ in the sense that he can understand only what he has the ability to understand. But the very point in question is, *what* has man the ability to understand? And it will not do summarily to exclude from this ability knowledge of God, or ingeniously to plead that because it is *I* that know God, it is not God that I know.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, Martineau writes : “It all comes to this, that we cannot know God out of all relation, apart from His character, apart from His universe, apart from ourselves. . . . True God so regarded will not, in the rigorous metaphysical sense, be absolutely infinite. But we know no reason why He should be.”<sup>2</sup>

With this I respectfully agree; but that which is not absolutely infinite is, in fact, finite, and it seems simpler to say so at once. If this be so, the inexpugnable persistence with which human thought clings to the idea of a personal Deity may rest on a true insight into reality, and we may be permitted to contemplate the God of Creation—the God who deals with the world and mankind—as being *in relation to that creation* personal in nature, conditioned in character, and—what is chiefly important for our present purpose—finite in power. To re-

<sup>1</sup> *Theism*, Davidson.

<sup>2</sup> *Science, Nescience, and Faith*.

cognise that the Divine power is in this sense limited will not really do violence to religious feeling, because some such limitation is tacitly admitted already. Few people, for instance, can really believe that the Deity of their worship has power to alter the multiplication table or to recall the past. While with regard to the existence of evil, this recognition, if it does not completely explain the mystery, at least brings it within the possibility of explanation. The evil which is wholly inexplicable as the work of an omnipotent benevolence, may be compatible with a benevolence whose energy is subject to limitations of power, and may be regarded as a necessary element in the scheme of a Deity whose general purpose is nevertheless benign. We can thus escape from the mockery of belauding a love which, though armed with the fulness of power, hurls evil upon us in a myriad forms; while evil itself loses all its malignity when it is seen to be the rod of God's discipline, not the scourge of His vengeance.

The goal of human evolution is far beyond us yet, but a glance at its past progress may enable us to perceive its trend, and how evil has helped to keep men's footsteps to the track. We need not attempt to unravel the story of that pre-human ancestry from whose obscurity man emerged, though even in these early stages evil, in the form of suffering, want, strife, danger, and fear, fulfilled its beneficent purpose of developing body and quickening mind. Indeed, it is still to be found in this form in the pains by which nature protects us from many kinds of injury. We might roast to death at our firesides if heat had no sting for us, or bleed

to death unconsciously if a wound gave no pain, or perish without the help of a physician but for the warning pangs of disease. In cases such as these, where our own conduct is a factor, it is easy to recognise the utility of evil as an educating influence. But in the case of evils which are not connected, or not directly connected with conduct, the question is certainly more obscure. The earthquake or the hurricane, for instance, are wholly unrelated to human action, and their havoc brings no intelligible message to us. The same may be said of the hereditary disease which burdens its victim with apparently unprovoked evil, or the so-called accident which strikes down a useful life, thereby spreading misery which seems both unmerited and aimless. To what useful end, it may be asked, do evils like these minister, or what tokens do they reveal of a benevolent purpose? The answer is not easy; but before passing judgment, we must remember that we have only a fraction of the facts before us. Rarely, if ever, can we know in full even the present conditions of the particular case, and of those which belong to the past or the future we can know nothing. Moreover, even where the mystery seems darkest, good is not seldom seen to arise from the evil which appeared to be purposeless or cruel, in the form of energies stimulated, character braced, or latent qualities brought to light. Consequently, though we may not be able to apprehend the full import of such evils as these, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a more complete knowledge might reveal to us their value in the Divine scheme, by which creation works under its appointed conditions to its appointed end.

But when the stage of distinctive humanity is attained, evil which is related to conduct speedily assumes the most important place, and becomes a powerful influence in shaping that moral development which is peculiarly and exclusively human. Animal evolution is confined almost entirely to the interests of the individual. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise, since it is worked out in that stern struggle for survival in which the interests of the individual must be paramount, even though, in the transient parental instincts, we may find the germs of the altruism which is to come. But the full growth of this only becomes possible when animal consciousness is replaced by human self-consciousness, and there dawns upon the Self an awareness of other Selves, full of the same riotous egoism, and equally bent on asserting it. Collisions between these primitive human units are frequent and violent, till, taught painfully by the evil which such collisions engender, the conflicting Selves are schooled into a rude respect for each other's interests. From this moment the principle of altruism, which is at the root of all moral progress, is established, but without evil it could have hardly seen the light. It matters little in this connection whether some germinal idea of the distinction between right and wrong is innate in us, or whether these conceptions are wholly derived from our experiences of pleasure and pain; for in either case pain or evil to the offender is the sanction by which the moral law is enforced. Where man's duty to his neighbour is concerned, the penalty of the savage's wrong-doing is to be found in the retaliation inflicted upon him by his

injured fellow-savage. A similar penalty awaits the wrong-doing of the civilised man in the organised retribution of public or social law; but apart from these external penalties, he has also to reckon with the subtler pain which springs from the reproaches of conscience or the pangs of remorse.

And at this point morality enters upon a higher phase. In the earlier stages of moral development the authority of the right rested on a basis of sullen dread, or, at best, a peddling calculation that honesty was the best policy. Low as this standpoint may seem, no other was then possible. It would be idle to preach the beauty of holiness to a savage who was still learning the first lessons of duty under the stern discipline of evil. But from this compulsory observance of duty there gradually springs up a sense of approval of the right, independently of the penalties which avenge its violation; and in the goodness to which we have been driven by the wholesome chastisement of evil, we now recognise a treasure to be prized for its own sake. Shepherded by these influences into the right path, man finds it grow easier beneath his feet, till at length the moment comes when he begins to perceive whither it is leading him. And in the light of this new dawn he can discern the outlines of the Divine purpose which is working to its end in creation, and that he too, as God's instrument, may minister to its achievement. Morality, in its deepest and broadest sense, is now seen to lie in the furtherance of this purpose, and as conduct grows ever more conformable to it, duty will melt into love, and evil, its weary task accomplished, will fade away into the mists of the past.



When we recognise frankly, what all the facts point to, namely, that the Deity in His relation to man works under conditions—self-imposed it may be—but still conditions, which preclude the exercise of omnipotence, then, and not till then, can we dispel the doubts which cluster round the conception of a Divine author of evil. By this means only can we escape the conclusion that creation must be tainted with a Divine malignance, or frame any explanation of evil which does not outrage the intelligence by its unreason, or shock the moral sense by its injustice. We may treat with all tenderness the uncritical devotion which thought to honour the Deity by a lavish ascription of attributes, some of which were meaningless as applied to the absolute, and others were impossible as applied to any personal manifestation of it. But we have swept out of the shadow of this past into a newer day, which brings with it fuller knowledge and clearer thought; and we cannot with reason assent any longer to misconceptions which are possible only to a cruder faith. There is mystery enough in the world around us from which we cannot escape, and before which we can only bow in silence, but we need not add to this a mystery which lies, not so much in the truth of things, as in the vagaries of human thought. The mystery of evil owes its mysteriousness chiefly to the incongruous attributes with which earlier thought invested its author. Clear away these disfigurements, and the moral reproach of the mystery will disappear with them, and evil, freed from all that is malignant, may then find place in the Divine scheme, as a stern but faithful minister of its benign purpose.



## CHAPTER XII

### A POSSIBILITY

IN the preceding chapter I have attempted to show that the Deity may legitimately be contemplated under two aspects, the one philosophical, the other religious. The Deity of philosophy must be infinite and absolute ; the personal Deity of our religion can be neither. How are these to be reconciled ? I have pointed out that the difficulty may be solved by supposing the personal Deity of our religion to be a self-limitation of the absolute Deity of philosophy. Under this conception the God of our worship will appear as a Divine manifestation, wherein the absolute Deity has indued an aspect of finiteness, so as to ensure the due fulfilment of the purpose of creation, and a system of close, harmonious, and intelligible relations between creator and created.

If this conclusion be adopted, it may suffice to satisfy our religious requirements, so far as the earth and humanity are concerned. But what of the rest of the universe in its widest sense, seen and unseen ? If, as Mr. Wallace appears to hold, this earth of ours is the only home in the universe of intelligent beings, the question does not arise ; but if he be incorrect in this view, it at once becomes urgent. Without

criticising the arguments of his most interesting book, *Man's Place in Nature*,—for which indeed I have not the requisite scientific knowledge,—I venture to think that his conclusion, whether right or wrong, is irrelevant. If I understand him correctly, he only succeeds in showing that no other orb in the universe would be suitable for *human* life and intelligence; and that is a conclusion which for my present purpose I am not concerned to deny. It may well be that no beings *physically* identical with man could inhabit any other globe than the earth, and yet that beings intellectually akin to, but physically different from man, could exist without difficulty even in the Sun. I do not care to dispute whether the existence of intelligent beings other than man outside the earth is or is not probable, I only insist that it is possible. And if there are such beings, must their God be identical with ours?

The question is no new one. It was at the root of the Deist controversy of the eighteenth century, which gave voice to the growing doubts as to whether the tribal deity of the Jews could possibly be the God of nature and the whole earth. The Deists were nominally silenced for the time, but the controversy has, on this point, long been settled in their favour; and the modern problem takes this larger form—Is the Deity whom we worship as the governor of the earth, the only personal manifestation in the universe of the absolute Deity?

It may well be that this is so. It is quite possible that a single self-limitation sufficed to fulfil the creative purpose of the absolute Deity, and to administer all the creation so called into being. But,

though possible, it is not necessary ; for if there has been one such self-limitation, there may also have been more than one.

Let it be clearly understood that "creation" as here used does not mean or suggest the calling something into existence out of non-existence. Such an idea of creation is incompatible with the belief in an absolute Deity, since there can be no non-existence outside the infinity of the absolute. Creation as here used means a self-limitation of the Divine absolute by which finite things are given their particular existence. Only in this way can they be produced at all ; for obviously some particular finite object, say an apple, can only acquire its special properties by being limited off from the absolute existence in which all properties are merged. Thus it derives its existence not from nothing but from the absolute ; and creation is not an external token of God's power, or an external monument of His glory, but part of His very essence.

Are we then compelled to declare that, apart from our own terrestrial system, the universe contains no other such creation ? May it not be that the Divine spirit has manifested, and is still manifesting itself, in countless other schemes of creation under the governance of other personal self-limitations ? It is possible, at least, that this spirit, which we find in the God of our worship, may also be found under other personal aspects, for other intelligences, and for other schemes.

A plurality such as this of Divine manifestations would of course have nothing in common with the polytheism of Paganism, or even with the Manichæan

polytheism of orthodoxy, with its rival powers of good and evil confronting each other in an eternal antagonism. For its multiplicity would be a multiplicity of expression only, with the supreme Divine unity underlying all its personal manifestations.

Nor need this possibility in any way prejudice our own religious beliefs. Whatever answer is to be given to the question, these remain untouched. The God of our worship is still the one absolute Deity as presented to us, whether this absolute Deity be or be not manifested to other intelligences in some other form. For it cannot be too often repeated that of an absolute Deity we can know nothing perfectly ; we can only know such a Deity as presented under the finite conditions of a personal God. Such a presentation must be partial only, but it is not on that account either a falsity or a delusion. When we once accept the belief that Creation is the outcome of a Divine scheme, we may safely conclude that our knowledge of the Author of the scheme is aptly adjusted to our needs and our capabilities. But we cannot legitimately go further than this. We cannot make ourselves the measure of the universe, and declare that the Deity cannot be known at other times, in other places, under other conditions, and to other intelligences, save under the presentation known to us ; or that the Divine purpose includes no other personal manifestations of Deity save the God whom we worship.

But though the question does not immediately affect our religion, it may have a bearing on the religious side of our philosophy, so far as this looks to the ultimate destiny of man. If we are to regard

the future career of the soul as an advance to greater and greater heights of excellence, what limits are we to put to this progress? At what point can we assume that it will be said to man, So far shalt thou go and no further? The orthodox view, it is true, does contemplate very definite limits to this progress. It offers us the prospect of becoming glorified men, but little more. It offers happiness, rather than spiritual growth; the rapture of adoration, but no share in God's work. The bliss of heaven may possibly satisfy the human desire for mere happiness, but its condition is stagnation so far as spiritual development is concerned. We need not, however, trammel our thoughts of the hereafter with conceptions which, with all respect, are confessedly outworn. And if we consider the question fairly, we shall see little reason to suppose that the Divine power will interpose an arbitrary check on our advance, while there are still heights to be gained. We must ever bear in mind that all creation is at core Divine, and that—in Carlyle's glowing words—"through every star, through every grass blade, and most through every living soul, the glory of a present God still beams." And so far as we can trace the Divine purpose therein revealed, eternal self-manifestation seems to be the keynote of the whole. On every side we see testimony to the same gradual but unerring development from simple to complex, from lowly to exalted. Why, then, are we forbidden to suppose that the Divine purpose may contemplate the ultimate evolution of each human soul into as full a manifestation of the absolute Deity as the limitations of personality will permit, making it thereby a new

centre of creative power, and a fresh fount for the outpouring of the Divine Will? May not the soul which, in its struggle upwards, has learnt the full lesson of obedience, be deemed worthy to enter upon an inheritance of power, and to be entrusted, as God's minister, with control of the career of some new world or system?

These are heights which thought can hardly ken; distant peaks of the Delectable Mountains shining as yet but faintly through the clouds which enshroud our path. Yet who shall say that they may not be gained? Who shall say that the purpose which throbs through the Cosmos may not be wrought out by a hierarchy of ministering spirits; morning stars which shall sing together, sons of God rejoicing in the task of making manifest the Deity which is behind the veil?



## CHAPTER XIII

### A RECAPITULATION

IN the preceding pages I have attempted to deal with certain salient questions, some or all of which inevitably present themselves to any one who seriously considers the problem of human existence. What is its cause, and what its purpose? What are its conditions, mental, moral, and physical? What is the truth about the universe in which we are placed? Whence have we come, whither are we bound, and what is that which awaits us at the unknown goal? The questions are plain, but the answers to them are many in number and manifold in character, displaying all shades of opinion, from the glowing assurances of positive knowledge, to the flat denial of even the possibility of any knowledge at all. Broadly speaking, these various solutions may be grouped under two great heads, those offered by theology on the one hand, and those offered by science and philosophy on the other. The conflict between the two has been long and obstinate, and is by no means over yet. But during its progress the antagonists have improved their knowledge of each other, with the result that the original rage of battle is melting into an earnest desire for peace, if only a

reasonable *modus vivendi* can be found. Under these circumstances, we may usefully consider whether the controversy has not brought to light the elements, at any rate, of a creed with a wider scope, which can embrace all that is of permanent value in religion without rejecting the teachings of philosophy and science. I have already attempted to indicate some of the conclusions which such a creed should embrace, and I will briefly present them once more for consideration.

In the first place, however, to make the formulation of such a creed possible, the question must be honestly faced on either side. Theology must frankly render unto science the things that are hers, and where religious theory conflicts with scientific fact, the theory must be modified to suit the fact, not the fact distorted to fit the theory. Science, on the other hand, must recognise that, outside the limits of her domain, she cannot claim to dogmatise, or to scorn the yearnings which rise so persistently from depths of human nature which she has never sounded. This creed must, like all creeds, rest on certain postulates; and for this we need make no apologies, for science no less than religion has her unprovable assumptions. Kant, as we know, declared the three morally necessary convictions—postulates of the practical reason—to be God, immortality, and freedom. But this formula demands too much from science. The existence of God and the immortality of man are essential to any religion in the ordinary sense of the term; but free-will would be hopelessly incompatible with that unbroken order which is the fundamental doctrine of science. In-

deed, though the religious are strangely slow to perceive it, it would be equally fatal to that Divine ordainment of the world which is nominally the foundation of their religious belief. For God, immortality, and freedom, we must therefore substitute God, immortality, and order, if our creed is to walk in peace with science. The weight of evidence is strongly in favour of the reality of the order on which science insists, and even if denial were possible, religion has no real reason for denying it. Religion need only claim, on grounds which are admittedly outside the jurisdiction of science, that this order shall be interpreted as the outcome of a Divine ordainment. Creation, therefore, will be regarded as a scheme permeated by an inviolate order, the end of the scheme being the fulfilment of a Divine purpose. There can be no uncertainty about such an end, and no uncertainty in the processes by which it will be reached. It is a destined end to be attained by destined means, a consummation of Divine handiwork, bearing the stamp of Divine wisdom and power. If we seek to learn the purpose which animates this scheme, our best expedient is to interrogate the past; and from a survey of the past we are able to infer with a high degree of probability that man's welfare is at any rate one of its objects.

To the past we must also turn if we seek to find the origin of the human soul. And here we are confronted by two possibilities. Does the soul spring into existence for the first time at birth, or is it a product slowly evolved from lower mental and spiritual forms? On this question science and theology have been at variance, but there can be

little doubt what the answer must be. The more we reflect, the more incredible does it seem that man's soul should be a special creation at his birth, with no past behind it. Apart from the scientific objections to this view, the moral difficulties which it presents, when considered in connection with the orthodox teaching of which it forms part, are alone sufficient to discredit it. It forces us to suppose that the most degraded criminal, in a fit of passion, has power to call into existence an immortal soul, with the awful possibility of eternal perdition before it. Moreover, the injustice of allowing new souls to be created under such conditions is aggravated by the fact that they do not start on their course either with a fair field or with no favour. They do not start with a fair field, because they are affected by their hereditary proclivities; and they do not start on equal terms, because some are more favoured than others by their surrounding circumstances. The offspring of half a dozen generations of criminals, with the evil instincts of its ancestry nurtured by the vice and stimulated by the want by which it is usually surrounded, is dragged down by a hundred influences beyond its own control. Reverse these conditions, and every surrounding influence helps the new soul to rise. Theoretically, since each is supposed to be endowed with free-will, the two souls start with equal possibilities. But, practically, everybody knows that this is nonsense; and even the stoutest Libertarian will hardly venture to assert that each of the two souls is equally capable of choosing the right.

But if we turn from theology to the living book

of nature, we learn that the system of nature is not one of sudden creations, but of gradual development, and that the history of man, so far as it is known to us, gives us no reason to suppose that he is excluded from this orderly progress. Consequently, man's earthly life should be regarded, not as a single brief period of probation, with nothingness behind it, and a future of unprogressive fixity beyond the grave, but one of the many stages of his development, and neither the first stage nor the last.<sup>1</sup> The earliest of these stages are buried in the darkness of the remote past, the last is still beyond the range of human vision; but we can form some idea of those which are nearer to man's present level. Looking backwards, we see a gradual development of physical structure till *physical* man is reached. But what of psychical man? We cannot, it is true, follow the evolution of mind with the certainty with which we can trace that of its bodily tenement, but there are strong reasons for supposing that they develop together. These I need not repeat here; but it may be well to bear in mind that half the difficulties which surround this question spring from the idea that mind and matter are two ultimate and opposed existences, instead of regarding them as cognate

<sup>1</sup> In St. John's Gospel, xiv. 3, Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many mansions." The word "mansions" must strike every one as a peculiar expression in this context, and it is, in fact, a mis-translation of the Greek word *μοναί*, which means "stations," "stages," or "resting-places." "Mansions" seems to be simply a literal translation of the "*Mansiones*" of the Vulgate, which also bears the meaning of "stations" or "stopping-places." The passage therefore seems rather to indicate a series of stages corresponding to various degrees of progress or development.

but distinct manifestations of some principle which is behind them both. Mind and matter are therefore united by the kinship of a common origin ; and as it is impossible to form any intelligible conception of mind without investing it with the material attribute of extension, so it is impossible to frame any explanation of matter which does not involve a non-material element.

But while the development of mental structure proceeds *pari passu* with that of physical structure, it cannot follow quite the same route. The physical structure of an animal in due course breaks up after death, and survives alone in the structural *tendencies* transmitted to its offspring. But with respect to the mental structure, I have advanced the suggestion that this does not perish with the body, but survives as a discarnate mind-structure. Such a mind-structure, in the case of the lower animals, progresses by absorption into higher mind-structures, but in the case of man preserves an individual independence through the various stages of the evolutionary career which yet lie before him. This view, as I have shown, supplies a possible explanation of the difficulties which beset the question of the destiny of animal minds, by showing how they may enter upon the inheritance of immortality, though not in an individual capacity.

With the lessons of the past to guide us, we can now venture to speculate on the nature of the stage of existence which is to follow our life on earth. And as to this, we cannot suppose that it will involve either a sudden leap into spiritual perfection or a plunge into eternal punish-



ment. We are certainly not yet prepared for the one, nor can we conceivably have merited the other. By all analogies it must be a stage whose conditions are not greatly dissimilar to those of our present life, but with higher opportunities, sufficient to meet the demands of any development possible in the preceding stage. And, stage by stage, as we move onwards, our characters become shaped into a closer and closer accordance with the Divine purpose, till the end—with all its vast possibilities—be reached, when the accordance is complete and they become one with it.

In the chapter on "After Death" I have touched on some aspects of this future life, from the point of view that, at the close of our present existence, we bid a final farewell to this world of ours. But there is a most interesting theory which contemplates our repeated return to it. I need hardly say that I refer to the doctrine of reincarnation, a very ancient belief which has lately been brought into notice by the modern Theosophists. According to this, the soul progresses by means of successive reincarnations on this or some other planet, in each of which it reaps the harvest of the *Karma* set up by its previous conduct, with intervals, mostly of intense happiness, between each incarnation. The acceptance of this theory—in some respects so sufficing—would clear away many of the difficulties which attach to the ordinary theories of immortality; but it appears to me to be open to at least one serious, though perhaps not fatal, objection. The hereditary transmission of mental as well as physical qualities seems to

modern ideas to be completely established; but the theory of reincarnation, though leaving physical heredity untouched, absolutely annihilates mental heredity. For while a man's eyes or hair or voice may properly be referred to ancestral sources, his mental qualities, on this theory, can have no such origin, since they belong to the reincarnating soul, not to the bodily tenement into which it enters. On this view, the mental qualities are the *concomitants*, not the *results* of heredity—a conclusion which is very difficult to reconcile with what seem to be the facts of the case. The explanation given by Theosophy, if I rightly understand it, is that the variety of physical bodies constantly being produced is so great, that the reincarnating soul has practically no difficulty in finding a tenement suitable for the due functioning of its mental and spiritual powers. Thus, to take a simple instance, a musical soul about to reincarnate will have no difficulty in finding a body with a delicate nervous system, pliant artistic fingers, and so forth. The explanation is not impossible, though it is not very satisfactory; but here I must leave it.

The heaven and hell of orthodoxy cannot, it is true, be accepted in the crude forms in which they are commonly presented, but in each successive stage we may expect to find something corresponding to them, since our happiness or unhappiness there must depend on the extent to which we have fitted ourselves for its conditions during the preceding stages of our development. Under the operation of this law of natural requital, each stage is, in a certain

sense, made a place of reward and punishment. But this really has little in common with the ecclesiastical doctrine, since, though inexorable, it is not vindictive, and is moreover accurately adjusted to each particular case. Its purpose, of course, is to train us to follow what is right and eschew what is wrong; but here the objection may be raised that it is wholly incompetent to do this. It may be said that though natural requital may teach us prudence, it cannot teach us duty; that it may show us what is profitable, but can tell us nothing about what is right; that it may account for our idea of what is inexpedient, but cannot account for our sense of sin. The answer is that our sense of sin is derived from the feeling of inferiority which attends wrongdoing.

It is clear, I think, that the moral instincts, which are undoubtedly possessed by civilised man, are undoubtedly not possessed by low savages, and consequently cannot be original elements of human nature. They must therefore either have been miraculously implanted in man at some later stage of his development, or must have grown up naturally in the course of that development. There can be no doubt as to which of these two solutions is to be preferred; and if we adopt, as we surely must adopt, the conclusion that our moral instincts are the growth of an orderly development, natural requital is the only possible influence under which this development could have been educed. The moral observances which, under the penalties of natural requital, are at first enforced as matters of expediency, become gradually elevated to the level of duties, as

man develops a truer sense of his own dignity, and a clearer insight into his relations with God.

The very indirectness by which this result is obtained, though it may seem at first an objection, will on closer consideration confirm our conclusion. For indirectness is of the essence of nature's procedure in working out the Divine purpose. She has no taste for heroic legislation. Taking the materials which she finds before her, with patient and cunning hands she moulds them to meet the needs of the present, and then utilises her handiwork by modifying it to meet those of the future. Thus, to take the instance of our special senses, nature knew better than to endow her first lowly organisms with hearing, sight, or smell. Such gifts would have been as unsuitable for them as an innate sense of right and wrong to a savage. No; she was content to bestow on them all that they were capable of receiving—a simple power of reacting to external stimuli, molar or molecular. To this humble origin must be traced the highly discriminative sense powers which we now enjoy, all of which may perhaps be described with sufficient accuracy as modifications of an elementary sense of touch. In like manner, natural requital, originally concerned with driving home the lessons of prudence, is called, when the time comes, to the aid of the laws of duty. Let my children, says nature, first learn to shun evil for their own sakes; they shall learn in due season to shun it for mine. Though the offender may evade for the moment any external penalty, he cannot stifle the stinging sense of inferiority which is attached to the offence. And this sense, sooner or later, will imprint

on his soul, in characters which may not be effaced, the conviction that in conduct there is a higher and a lower way, and that the higher way is mine.

If we be asked what the test may be of right and wrong, the answer, as we have seen, is that that conduct will be right which *directly* furthers the Divine purpose in creation, and that wrong which *directly* retards it. The intention of the agent will still in many cases affect the quality of the act, and in every case will affect his own character, and thus will lose none of the influence on the general course of moral evolution to which it is entitled. But, once grant the existence of a Divine scheme, and it is clear that right and wrong must be tested by a broad reference to its general purpose, not to the limited and local purposes of the various human agents who are engaged in carrying some parts of it into effect.

There is yet another conclusion which is made inevitable by the belief in a Divine scheme of things. The purpose which God has ordained can in no wise fail, and though the end be far, its attainment is sure. And the same certainty which is ordained for the end permeates also the means by which it is to be accomplished. In such a scheme there is no room for chance, no room for lawlessness, and no room for that supposed freedom of the will, which, when closely examined, is seen to involve both. It is said that though the argument for Determinism may be unanswerable, it is nevertheless unconvincing. But in truth it is only unconvincing to those who refuse to be convinced, and who shrink from the conclusion out of fear of its supposed consequences. The evidence against free-will is practically overwhelming,

but Libertarians nevertheless persist in their faith, on the ground that without free-will there can be no moral responsibility, no moral distinctions, and no moral government of the world. The objection, however, is unsound. Determinism, so far from denying moral responsibility, emphatically affirms it in the only sphere to which it can be legitimately ascribed, that is to say, in the relations between man and man. Nor is it true that free-will is necessary to morality or the moral government of the world. For, as we have seen, free-will, even if it were possible, could give no moral value whatever to conduct; while it is in no way necessary to the belief which finds moral government in the operation of a Divine scheme of orderly progress, and morality in the conduct which furthers its purpose. Such a faith stands in no dread of a Divine tribunal with monstrous penalties in store for human frailty; and consequently has no need of the supposed free-will which is necessary to give such a tribunal any sort of moral justification. The belief in our freedom to plunge into Avernus, which Libertarians are so anxious to preserve, will be replaced by a conviction that we are destined inevitably to win the skies, and that eternal perpetuation of evil which the orthodox eschatology involves, by an ultimate and all-absorbing triumph of good.

The Libertarian—the religious Libertarian at any rate—cannot deny that there is a divinely ordered scheme of things, yet the existence of such a scheme is absolutely fatal to the freedom of his will.<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noticing that Indeterminist Libertarians claim a larger freedom for man than many Self-determinist Libertarians will allow



is one of the sorrowful chances which befall those who—with the best intentions in the world—try to torture the facts of nature into conformity with their religious or philosophical theories. Again, it is necessary to point out that the argument from consequences is an extremely dangerous weapon for Libertarians to handle. For a little consideration will show that the consequences of free-will would be truly appalling. Without dwelling on the ruin to the Divine scheme which would be a certain consequence of human free-will, let us observe how profoundly this and its other consequences must affect our attitude towards the author of the scheme.

We have here a Deity, armed, it is declared, with the fulness of power, who initiates a scheme of creation, which, it is also declared, is intended to promote the happiness of His creatures. This scheme is under His constant and immediate supervision ; not a hair falls to the ground without His knowledge and approval ; and every step is supposed to be provided for with the accurate certainty which lies at the disposal of perfect prescience and perfect power. A leading part in this great enterprise having been assigned to humanity, human conduct would naturally be subject to the same certainty as the rest of the scheme. And yet we are asked by Libertarians to suppose that at this point the author of the scheme deliberately invested humanity with a freedom of will which would shatter to bits every part

to God. For it has often been urged by Self-determinists that even God must be regarded as determined by His own nature, and that being good, He is incapable of willing evil.

of it which depended for its due development on the certainty of human conduct.

How are we to ascribe wisdom or benevolence to such action as this? What would be said of a mechanician who, after constructing an engine of great capabilities, were to introduce into its machinery some contrivance which rendered it absolutely uncertain in which direction the engine would move when the power was applied? Nay more, if the orthodox view be adopted, we have further to picture this Deity smiting with His vengeance the weak and ignorant beings, who indeed have wrecked His scheme, but only by using the weapon which He Himself had placed in their hands. No moral relations would be possible with such a Deity, and only those degraded religious relations which belong to the religion of terror. This is the price which must be paid for free-will; and if, as Libertarians would have it, Determinism is to be rejected for its consequences, what shall be said of their freedom?

No doubt, upon any theory of the universe, a deep mystery must hang over the nature of the Deity and His relations with His creatures. Philosophy can only recognise a Deity that is absolute and infinite. Religion pleads earnestly for a personal, and therefore a limited, God. The difficulty may be met, as we have seen, by regarding the Deity of religion as a limited manifestation of the absolute Deity of philosophy, a view which finds support in the fact that all creation is, and must be, a process of limitation. The God of our worship is thus brought into intelligible relations

with His creatures; and in the limitation of His power we may find a means of reconciling the existence of evil with our faith in His benevolence.

The God of religion is, and ought to be, the object of our worship, but it must be a worship attuned as far as may be to the Divine realities. Bearing in mind that the order of nature has been established by God for the due fulfilment of His purpose, no prayer can be efficacious or legitimate which would seek to disturb that order. Indeed, when we have once realised that we form part of a "foreseen and foreordered scheme of things,"<sup>1</sup> the futility of prayer in this sense becomes apparent. Nevertheless there is ample room for such prayer as may itself be an efficient part of the Divine order, or a means of realising man's personal relations to God. And indeed, as the personal relations grow closer between creature and Creator, prayer will become blended with life, or rather life itself will become a perpetual prayer, not so much as entreaty, still less as deprecation, but as an eager aspiration to further the purpose which the Deity has partly entrusted to our hands.

The central principle of the theory which I have here attempted to sketch is the belief that our existence and destiny are bound up in a Divine scheme of orderly evolution, which is unfalteringly sustained and guided by Divine power. This belief need not be rejected by any but thoroughgoing materialists, and is indispensable to any reasonable conception of the universe. It is in fact adopted,

<sup>1</sup> I am quoting from a sermon which I heard preached by an eminent divine.

openly or tacitly, by all Theistic systems, though they are disposed to ignore its full logical consequences. The theory may well be erroneous in some points, inadequate in others, but I venture to think that it is only on *some such* principle that any real solution can be found for "the enigmas of life" which confront us. Though it is not bound to any particular creed, it is hostile to none, for it rests on that faith in the reality of a Divine providence which is the foundation of them all. Broadly and fully accepted, it enables us to see the good in things apparently evil, the true in that which seems to be false.

We may shudder at the devil-worship in which religion found its first expression, and yet recognise the service which it has rendered in the past. The religion of terror, in the forms which have survived to the present day, may rightly be condemned as a mischievous misconception. In the past it was equally a misconception, but so far from being mischievous, was of the highest value. Only by an appeal to his fears could the primal savage be forced into the recognition of a Divine power above him, and thus through the religion of terror, the belief in *some* deity became implanted in his heart. However degraded such a shrine may be, no other could then have compelled his worship; and the noblest religious aspirations of to-day became possible only in the fateful moment when man turned to cower in abject deprecation before a devil. At a later stage the exaggerated conceptions of the Divine power, which we now see to be incompatible with the realities of the Divine order, sustained an invaluable conviction

of God's majesty, in a society where might was still the first object of admiration. Even the abominations of the Inquisition and religious persecution generally, though tainted too often with baser influences, sprang from, and in turn gave strength to, the passionate belief that God's honour and God's truth were worth fighting for and dying for.

And now a word as to the various religious systems of the day, all claiming to be exclusively true, all claiming to be final, each of them more or less contradicting the others, and all of them persistently contradicting themselves. Gibbon has described the religions which clustered in imperial Rome, as being, under various aspects, equally true, equally false, equally useful. With all due reservations, something of the sort might be said of the creeds of to-day. There is no past creed whatever which has not served some useful purpose, since it expressed the highest religious conceptions of which its adherents were then capable. Nor can any present creed whatever be condemned as useless so far as it represents an actual living faith. The differences, often acute enough, which divide these various creeds are of no real import, for they are destined to disappear, as the fragmentary truths of all creeds become blended into one, and their passing discords are

"Lost in the notes on the lips of his choir  
That chant the chant of the whole."

But though no creed has ever been useless, a creed's utility can be retained only on the condition that it should progress ; and the familiar claim of all

creeds to finality is the rock upon which they are all in danger of splitting. To concede this finality would be, in the first place, to ignore the many imperfections of the creeds themselves, and, in the second place, to deny a future to spiritual progress. As man's intellectual and spiritual development advances, his religious conceptions must needs grow broader; and any religion which proclaims the contrary stands self-condemned. Every man's creed, *so far as it is a real expression of his faith*, is useful for him, and true for him. It is the accurate expression of what he is religiously fit for, and so long as it retains that character it is an unmixed benefit to him. As its doctrines lose their hold on him, it degenerates into an incumbrance. When he has finally outgrown it, and yet will not abandon a nominal allegiance to it, it becomes a danger. Moreover, be it remembered, a creed is but a means to an end, not an end in itself. It may be a light on our upward way, but it is not the goal for which we make. When that goal is attained, all creeds as such must disappear, for faith will then be replaced by knowledge.

The manifold variety of the religions of the world need not be a matter for wonder, and is certainly no matter for reproach. No single religion could satisfy the diversities of human thought and temperament, which demand a corresponding diversity of creeds. Yet all alike testify to that untiring search after God which seems to be one of the deepest instincts of mankind. And this aspiration, if we do but trust it, will enable us to rise clear of the tumult, where creed clashes with creed, and science with all creeds.



alike. We may then discern dimly in the seeming chaos the inflexible order of a Deity to whom science and creed are equally parts of his purpose, and to whom we may lawfully ascribe the promise which brightened the old Aryan faith: "Howsoever a man approach me, in such wise will I accept him, for the ways which men take from every side are mine."

THE END

Telegrams :  
'Scholarly, London.'

41 and 43 Maddox Street,  
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